University of Alberta

Student Participation in Career and Life Management: Policy and Program Analysis and Educational Reform in Alberta

by

Katharina Antonia Kovacs Burns

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Box 47, Site 210, RR#2
St. Albert, AB
T8N 1M9

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Student Participation in Career and Life Management: Policy and Program Analysis and Educational Reform in Alberta** submitted by Katharina Antonia Kovacs Burns in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership.

MHaughey
Prof. Margaret Haughey, Supervisor

Prof. Jerrold Kachur

Linda Reutter
Prof. Linda Reutter

Prof. Alison Taylor

Gretchen C. Hess
Prof. Gretchen Hess

Prof. Hanne Mawhinney, External Examiner

Date: Sept. 29, 2000

The democratic spirit can be a great force. We need more of it to give hope to those who feel abandoned and bewildered in this brave new world of change. (Ray, 1999, p. 203)

Abstract

This study focused on the processes for program and policy analysis and reform, including the participation of stakeholders. Other social, cultural, political, and economic factors were also considered as part of the larger context for program and policy analysis and reform, and *participatory democracy*.

A case study approach was used with the current review of the Alberta high school Career and Life Management (CALM 20) curriculum and the policy which made it mandatory for graduation. More specifically, the nature of curriculum (CALM 20) and policy analysis and reform, and stakeholder (student) involvement was studied through the understandings obtained from interviews and focus groups with government decision makers, high school students and alumni, teachers, parents, and health professionals. Documents and observations were used to corroborate these understandings. The data were gathered and critically analyzed, resulting in the identification of core constructs ("the issues," "discourses and practices," "possibilities and alternatives," and "micro and macro considerations"). These constructs, along with categories and three major themes (power relations, sociopolitical issues, and power/knowledge discourses) became the foundation for a program and policy archeology framework.

Specifically with the case study, it was confirmed that curriculum, including CALM 20, and policy decisions were centralized with government and Alberta Learning. Decision makers did not consider students to be stakeholders, and therefore not involved directly with curriculum and policy reviews. However, students, as well as teachers, parents, and health professionals, wanted to be, and felt they should be involved in the education reviews and decisions, particularly with CALM 20 because of its life skills content.

A more critical analysis of the processes for program and policy decision making, including public and stakeholder input, is warranted and the conceptual framework from this study could guide the analysis.

Acknowledgements

This degree and study have been challenging and enlightening at the same time. I have enjoyed working with the many individuals who gave of their time and expertise to guide me or provide me with the information to pull the pieces of this study together. What seemed like an insurmountable task at the outset became a valuable experience in analysis and critical thinking, and I owe so much to those who helped me see things in an analytical and innovative manner.

I appreciated the support, guidance, and patience from my supervisor, Margaret Haughey, who took the time to help me shape and understand my thoughts and findings into something meaningful. She encouraged me to be creative and to adventure into unchartered areas to explore new ways of thinking about virtually everything. From Jerry Kachur I learned a lot about critical analysis and politics in policy and policy analysis. I appreciated Jerry's enthusiasm and energy. Whenever I felt lost or was floundering, he was able to talk things through with me and always ask the right questions to make me think of the possibilities to explore. Linda Reutter shared tremendous expertise about health, school health, and those critical pieces which are often overwhelmed by methodology and other technical aspects of research. Linda reminded me that health education is an important component in the education of our youth, and if not through the Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum, then through comprehensive school health promotion. Both Jerry and Linda provided insightful comments on various drafts of my proposal and thesis. Alison Taylor, too, provided me with comments on my thesis drafts and was very constructive as an examiner.

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

'Politics put aside as students grill Chretien'

> As for leadership qualities, Chretien told the kids they need to make decisions that inspire confidence. "You have to be clear and you have to be tough. You have to be fair. And you have to be lucky." (Mandel, 2000, p. B1)

Introduction

Stakeholder participation in decision-making processes for programs, services, and even policies is not new. It has been termed a *participatory approach* or *participatory democracy* (Montgomerie, 1994; Wharf & McKenzie, 1998). The stakeholders involved could be those who have vested interests in outcomes of programs and policies, those who provide services as part of programs and policies, or those who are considered consumers or users of programs and are directly affected by policies. Understandings about the participatory approach in program and policy reform are examined in this study. Program and policy reform as used in this study refers to the development, the analysis or review, and the reformulation processes for programs and policies. Other operational definitions for such terms used in this study are contained in Appendix A. To make a study of stakeholder participation in program and policy reform manageable, a specific case in education has been documented and analyzed critically using the perspectives of theorists such as Michel Foucault.

Foucault was selected because of his use of history and archeology in the context of framing human social issues, and his critical perspective on such sociopolitical topics as emancipation, discourses and discursive practices, power relations, and panopticism as applied to institutions such as schools. In addition to Foucault's use of the term "archeology," it is also used in a metaphorical sense in this study: I am digging or exploring for experiences and the truths as understood by government and stakeholder groups such as students concerning the processes and stakeholder involvement in program (education curriculum) and policy analysis, development, or reform. Layers of human and nonhuman data from the present and the past are gathered and explored for key themes. Once the themes are exposed or identified, another archeological process is applied, which is the building or construction of a framework or model based on the piecing together of the themes from the human and nonhuman data gathered. Such a framework allows one to visualize the actual layers consisting of the processes and stakeholders involved in program and policy analysis and reform and to make sense of otherwise unlinked masses of understandings, experiences, and document data. A similar approach could be applied to programs and policies in other public service sectors, including health and social services.

If we apply the notion of participatory democracy to public programs in education, health, or social services, what indicators are there to support the premise that decision makers and administrators are consulting or having the public or stakeholders such as students participate in the program and policy formulation or reform processes? And if stakeholders are being consulted, what is the extent of their involvement, and how are their recommendations being utilized? What are the perceived and actual roles of stakeholders in the program and policy development and reform processes? As Chelinsky (1987) and Patton (1987) pointed out, government decision makers are not inclined to take many risks in forming relationships with public groups, particularly because there could be political implications for future initiatives. For decision makers, it is one thing to assess the needs of the public or even students but quite another to acknowledge these groups as stakeholders involved in program and policy reform.

There are many examples and situations in education to which similar questions and analysis could be applied. Such examples start each chapter in this thesis to encourage the reader to think critically about the processes in program and policy development and reform including the reasons why things are done the way they are, and the involvement of stakeholders, if any.

My interest in the policy process came partly from my own professional work and experiences in policy analysis and advocacy for two non-government health-related organizations. I sought out a case example of the policy processes in education which would allow me to explore issues around stakeholder and government involvement in the process. As the study evolved, my interest gradually focused on the role of students in this process.

Purpose of the Study

This study developed a framework for understanding the processes involved in program and policy reform, and the role of stakeholders, in particular students, in these decision-making processes. A current specific case was selected to be studied. The case study involved students and stakeholders in the curriculum (Career and Life Management or CALM 20) and its related policy reform processes. The research explored and reported the understandings of students (high school and alumni), teachers, parents, and health professionals, as well as government officials and bureaucrats who are in a position to make decisions regarding curriculum development or reform and to set education policies.

Alberta's School Act, education policies, and resulting programs for kindergarten to Grade 12 have undergone numerous reviews and transitions since 1970. Indeed, many of the education policies and programs, particularly on health education, have undergone several revisions within a relatively short time span of 5 to 10 years. Alberta Education's reasons for these changes included "an outdated program, new knowledge about student learning and development, the changing needs of students and society, new knowledge in a subject, the need for continuity and consistency among programs, and major policy changes" (Alberta Education, 1989, p. 9).

Between 1991 and 1998, the CALM curriculum received two formal reviews and many informal ones; most were critical of the content of CALM, of the fact that it was a core program required for graduation, and of the scheduling difficulties students were having including CALM with other academic core courses. Consequently, Alberta Education proposed more changes to the CALM program (Alberta Education, 1992b; G. Vivone-Vernon, personal communication, Fall, 1997).

Why was this case selected? First, in 1996, the CALM 20 curriculum was slated for review, and in 1998 a decision from the Minister of Education was pending as to whether or not the CALM program would actually remain or be removed from the Alberta Education Program of Studies. Either way there would have been an impact on the kindergarten to Grade 9 health education curriculum. Once the Education Minister decided in 1999 that some form of CALM would be maintained in the Alberta high school curriculum, this meant that the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985) would also need to be reviewed in relation to the Education Business Plans, particularly since CALM has been a mandatory component for graduation as per the policy and business plan. This case had the elements for analysis related to program, policy, and stakeholder involvement.

Second, the research applies a critical analysis approach to how stakeholders and government understand the consultation processes for program and policy reform. The case included decisions regarding student consultations and participation in these processes, and demonstrated the relationship and understanding between government and stakeholders with a special focus on students. Specifically, the research questions were

> *What are the processes involved in curriculum (Career and Life Management or CALM 20) and policy reform, including stakeholder involvement?*
>
> *What is the specific nature of the participation of students as stakeholders in education curriculum and policy reform processes?*
>
> *What themes arising from the case study inform an archeological framework?*
>
> *What recommendations and implications can be made concerning program and policy reform and stakeholder involvement?*

These research questions are framed around my desire to understand the relationship among government and stakeholders such as students, and how this can be demonstrated in a conceptual framework for program and policy analysis, development, and reform.

Significance of the Study

The Alberta government has accepted the fact that more input is required from the public and different stakeholder groups for program and policy reviews and reform. Who are the stakeholders in these processes? For example, are students considered to be stakeholders in their education? Is student participation only "lip service" or actual democratic participation? As major consumers in the educational process and its outcomes, students have many experiences to contribute. In addition, they are diversified in their values and in the social determinants which influence their lives and learning, both of which need to be considered in curriculum and policy reform. From a different perspective, student participation may be limited. Are there any limitations to student participation? Examining the responses from government decision makers and students is significant in defining who are the "stakeholders" in education and, more specifically, whether students are considered as stakeholders and what their contributions are to the education curriculum and policy in Alberta.

In addition to gathering valuable information to clarify actual and perceived understandings, the results assisted in the development of a conceptual framework for identifying how the public or stakeholders such as students, along with other influencing factors, actually fit into or contribute to the program (curriculum) and policy analysis and reform processes. When the views of the public or major stakeholder interest groups are respected through the democratic process, their involvement and the extent of their involvement can be depicted within the conceptual framework.

This review and framework also contributed towards defining the specific purpose and relevance of programs and policies such as the CALM curriculum and its related policies, as discussed in the case study. For whom were the curriculum and policies designed? The purpose and relevance of the curriculum and related policies are weakened without the appropriate stakeholder investment and support. Because students are the recipients of the curriculum and of policy implementation, they had the most to gain in obtaining relevant learning experiences. Therefore, this case study explored how students and government decision makers view the purpose and relevance of both curriculum and policy. The purpose and relevancy of curricula are two things with which the Alberta government has been struggling since the early 1980s when curriculum reviews began. Are purpose and relevancy of curriculum and policy linked with the extent of student participation in making them so? The findings of this study could also serve as a template for analyzing the purpose and relevancy of other public programs and policies such as in health and social services.

As a result of the findings from this study, there is also an opportunity for stakeholder advocacy. In this case, *advocacy* refers to student rights, including their right to participate in curriculum and policy reform. Advocacy is a significant venue for political lobbying for stakeholder involvement in education reform. Results from this study identified contradictions between the rhetoric and realities of democratic participation. These findings could be shared with public groups, including students and others, so that these groups can appreciate where the gaps in their participation are; and with government decision makers so that they may attempt to make changes to internal policies concerning public or specific stakeholder involvement in public program and policy reform.

Stakeholder, especially student, involvement in program (curriculum) or policy development and reform is not well researched and documented, as is evident in the lack of literature on the topic. This study contributed toward decreasing this deficit and encourages more studies in this area. In addition, the information from students, those with an invested interest in the topic, and government decision makers may be of interest to other decision makers and groups concerned with different public or private sector programs, services, and policies.

Because this study emanates out of the CALM curriculum review specifically, the findings and framework could serve to inform government officials in Alberta Learning and others outside government about the roles stakeholders or students have played and could play in the consultation and reform processes.

Research Design

Albertans are affected daily by public services, programs, and policies, whether in health, social services, or other sectors. However, it is difficult to create a research study on general public and stakeholder involvement in the reform processes of public programs and policies. Therefore, I selected a case study design, specifically involving CALM 20 and its policy review and the involvement of students and other stakeholders in these processes. A critical analysis orientation was used in the analysis, and an archeological approach assisted in the development of the conceptual framework. There were some fundamental assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of such a study.

Assumptions

The primary assumption in this study was that the evolution or development of a conceptual framework for program and policy analysis and reform was crucial. The archeological approach was selected to serve this purpose, and would include stakeholder participation as a link throughout. This approach implies that the understandings of the stakeholders, through interviews or focus group discussions, and in documents would delineate the constructs, categories and themes. In turn, the constructs would form the infrastructure of the conceptual framework from which the themes and categories would arise. I assumed that an interpretive approach to the development of a conceptual archeological framework for program and policy analyses was the best method. The interpretation of constructs, common themes and categories from the interview and focus group transcripts would provide the layers or strata for a conceptual framework.

Consequently, a second assumption was that the conceptual framework, forged from a study of education, could be applied or adapted for use in other programs and policies for public sectors such as health and social services. These latter programs and policies shared the emphasis on stakeholder or consumer involvement in program and policy decision-making processes.

The final assumption was that stakeholder participants were forthright and honest when talking about student and stakeholder involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform decision-making processes. Participants were, of course, informed that their names would not be released to promote forthright conversation.

Delimitations

This study was conducted between 1998 and 2000 prior to CALM's potential implementation as a pilot in the fall of 2000 or 2001. The actual data from interviews and focus group discussions were collected between September 1998 and June 1999, during which time the outcome for CALM was still undecided.

Another delimitation for the study had to do with the selection of specific study participants for questionnaires, interviews, and focus group work in rural and urban Alberta. Because of where I lived and worked, Edmonton was the major urban center from which schools and participants were selected, primarily through permission from the appropriate Superintendent of Schools. One rural high school was also selected. The outreach school was in Central Alberta, and by default determined through accessibility. Alumni students were those in local postsecondary institutions. These alumni students volunteered to be participants in this study. Reaching other alumni who were not in postsecondary institutions did not occur because of the difficulties in locating groups or in obtaining their consent to participate.

A third delimitation is the focus on the students as "stakeholders" in the curriculum and education policy reform processes. This could send mixed messages to decision makers in Alberta Learning (post-study, 1999), or other government departments about who they should or should not consider for stakeholders. The intent of this study was not to lay blame, but rather to critically analyze and explore the reality and the understandings concerning direct stakeholder (student) participation in program (curriculum) and policy reform processes. It was important, however, to determine whether the practices of government decision makers are consistent with their values concerning stakeholder involvement in program and policy-making or reform processes.

Limitations

Within the timeframe of September 1998 to June 1999, I experienced difficulties in accessing all the designated stakeholders for the study. The researcher had to submit requests to ethics review committees and wait for decisions for access. School Board authorities limited my access to urban and rural schools in Edmonton and surrounding districts. Setting up interviews and focus group discussions in the schools for teachers, students, and parents was also challenging as a result of timing in particular. Also, the ethics reviews of the Regional Health Authority limited access to the health professionals. Postsecondary students were difficult to access because of their limited interest in participating in this type or any type of research study and because of their limited time availability. Students generally have different priorities that are often more pressing than being participants in a research study. I offered incentives to attract more student participants, but this did not make any difference to their interest in participating in the study. As a result of these challenges in gaining access to the different participants, the numbers for interviews and focus group discussions were fewer than expected.

Finding out which bureaucrats and politicians were relevant interviewees for this study also presented some limitations. They were identified primarily through secondary documents or through word-of-mouth from others in the then Alberta Education Department. Both retired and current bureaucrats and politicians were sought for their contributions and roles in past and current education curriculum and policy decision-making processes.

There also was limited access to primary source documents except for some of the meetings, consultations, and committees which I had the privilege of attending during my Field Practicum Placement in Alberta Education Curriculum Standards Branch in early 1998, and following in other committees. Otherwise most document analysis was restricted to secondary-source documents located in libraries or through Alberta Education staff.

In addition, during the interviews, one further limitation was their selective memories, understandings, or recollections of specific events related to the CALM curriculum review and of who was involved in consultations or meetings. With focus groups a different challenge for researchers is collecting the information from very vocal groups or very quiet ones. But the biggest challenge with focus groups was keeping them on track and covering the research questions. As Berg (1995) pointed out, these challenges to interviewing and conducting focus group discussions are not uncommon:

> Focus groups frequently contain members who might never have come together were it not for the creation of the group. Furthermore, the facilitator or moderator can control the assembly, alter the pace of discussions, change the direction of comments, interrupt or stop conversations, and so forth. Focus groups, then, like other forms of interviewing, are not truly natural conversations. . . . Most researchers who use focus group techniques acknowledge that group influences can distort individual opinion. (pp. 74-78)

Organization of the Thesis

The background for this study is presented in more detail in the chapters which follow. The CALM program review for the Alberta high school curriculum has been used as the case. The literature review in Chapter 2 provided some background to the education case study, including a discussion of the politics of education, curriculum, policy analysis and reform, and interest groups.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology and identifies a critical analysis orientation based on Focauldian and related perspectives. Data were collected and analyzed for the case study using an interpretive approach. From the data, constructs, categories and themes emerged to depict the process of stakeholder involvement in program and policy analysis, development and reform. Chapters 4 through 8 summarizes the data and interpretations from the transcripts and documents under four constructs which emerged from the data analyses. Chapter 4 specifically describes the data which fall under the construct of "The Issues: Program and Policy Development and Reform, and Who Should be Involved?" and focuses on who the respondents think should be involved specifically in curriculum and education policy development and reform decision-making processes. Chapter 5 contains what the respondents understood to be the past and current practices, actual happenings, and language or discourses concerning student and other stakeholder involvement in education curriculum and policy development and reform. Chapter 6 contains the actual documented discussions, activities, and events surrounding the development of CALM and its policies over three decades from 1970 to 2000. In Chapter 7, the possibilities or alternatives for student involvement in program and policy development and reform processes are reviewed.

Chapter 8 identifies the micro and macro political and environmental considerations in program and policy development and reform processes.

Chapter 9 contains the discussion of the data and related literature. Based on the four constructs, three major themes, and emerging categories, conclusions and recommendations from the data and responses in Chapters 4 through 8, Chapter 9 provides the arguments for a conceptual archeological framework. This chapter also critically analyzes various categories under each of the three major themes for each of the constructs which form the conceptual archeological framework.

Chapter 10 provides my reflections and conclusions about the study and the conceptual archeological framework. This chapter also contains some implications for researchers in policy studies, for policy and program analysts, for decision makers, and for stakeholders and advocacy initiatives

The three appendices contain the operational definitions for the study (Appendix A); the more detailed questions for interviews and focus group discussions with government decision makers, students, and others pertinent to this study (Appendix B); and the letters and consent forms for the participants of this study (Appendix C).

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

> Students with "Honk 4 Sturg" scrawled on their faces blocked traffic outside Sturgeon composite high school Friday [September 3, 1999] to protest rising fees, large classes and a plan to ban smoking on school property. . . . "They [teachers] sit in our classes and say 'stand up for your rights,' and we've done that." The total number of participants is estimated at up to 300. The students will not be disciplined for blockading the road just off school grounds, said Frizzell [principal of school]. "We're not going to take action just because they chose to take part in a democratic process," he said. "That would be pretty small of me." (Vallis, 1999, pp. B1, B10)

Introduction

The literature review focuses on the following areas: (a) the roles of education, schools, and pedagogy; (b) the politics of education, curriculum and health education; (c) general policy analysis and reform processes as they relate to education curricula; and (d) the political action of stakeholders, interest groups, and partnerships regarding education curricula and policies.

A key theme for the case study is power: power issues and relations between government and stakeholders such as students, and the hierarchy involved in decision-making processes for public programs such as education curriculum, and related policies. The public has come to accept the fact that there are power differences between government and stakeholders in most settings, and this type of power-authority is significant in the determination of whether stakeholders will even be involved in program or policy decision-making processes. The central fact is that governments have the power to make choices and decisions about policies and stakeholder involvement, whereas others do not. As a consequence, governments have been viewed as elite. Elitism in government is a concept Dye (1981) incorporated in elite theory:

> Elite theory suggests that "the people" are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy, that elites actually shape mass opinion on policy questions more than masses shape elite opinion. Thus, public policy really turns out to be the preferences of elites. Public officials and administrators merely carry out the policies decided upon by the elite. Policies flow "downward" from elites to masses; they do not arise from the mass demands. (p. 29)

On the one hand, those people, including students, whose status may be ranked low in terms of economic or other contributions towards society and government, would definitely not be considered elite, but rather insignificant in policy formation. In some circles, they are not considered to be stakeholders, but rather consumers. In fact, for students specifically, their voice, rights, and constitution have been embedded in their parental or adult voice and vote until the age of 18. Who in government advocates for the student? The perception is that the government decision makers are the "authoritative allocators of values for society" (Cibulka, 1994, p. 106), and therefore the proxy of every man, woman, and child to be affected by the said decision, usually through a policy or legislated act. On the other hand, the Alberta Minister of Education (1988 and 1990) stated that students are stakeholders in their own education and future, and that "the secondary education policy recognizes that the social role of education is achieved through the empowerment and development of people, not through the imposition of one set of views" (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 4). Furthermore, the Alberta government has made it clear in its education policy statement that the central focus is the student. Each principle contained within the school education curriculum is consistent with the following comment:

> The aim of education is to develop the knowledge, the skills and the positive attitudes of individuals, so that they will be self-confident, capable and committed to setting goals, making informed choices and acting in ways that will improve their own lives and the life of their community. (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 7)

No one doubts that there are distinct differences in the responsibilities and roles of the policy maker and the student. The policy maker in education is an expert in strategizing at the macro levels of education politics, whereas the student is the consumer receiving the services approved and sanctioned for delivery by school boards, principals, and teachers. Parents, too, will want to have their say regarding what goes into the curriculum and have had more to say about education policies which impact them and their children concerning mandatory components for graduation. What have students had to say about the curriculum and the education policies which influence their lives directly and daily for many years?

Although top-down decision making has been the practice for education curriculum development and policy formulation, attempts have been made to change this trend to one of more participatory democracy and citizenry involvement in decision-making processes. As Montgomerie (1994) stated:

> No longer is it possible nor is it wise for the stewards of the public trust to ignore the demands of an increasingly knowledgeable and articulate public. The responsiveness of government and publicly funded agencies to the demands of those they serve and who mandate their activities has become a critical issue. Public consultation has become an important component in the formulation of public policy and that is a significant departure from the historical role of administrators of public agencies. While the growth of consultative activities by government is a confirmation of timeless democratic principles, it is also a contemporary expression of a rising desire on the part of the public to have a greater say in the determination of the policies which affect their lives. (p. 1)

However, the distinction between citizens (basically everyone, or the general public), and stakeholders (those who have a direct and vested interest or stake in programs and policies because of the effect or outcomes), is important when talking about their involvement in program and policy decision making. Stakeholders are a subset of the citizen group. Although there will be similarities in discussing the two groups, this study focuses on stakeholders and their participation in education reform, specifically students. For example, both stakeholder and citizenry involvement must serve some purpose in policy decision making (Montgomerie, 1994). Both types of involvement present with many challenges including coordination of individuals to be involved, and consensus. Each program and policy situation will be different and will require different stakeholders or public consultation or participation. The question is: "Should the public or all citizens be involved in every program and policy decision"? "The underlying assumption is that people will have more confidence in a policy in whose development they were consulted" (Wharf & McKenzie, 1998, p. 85). But will having public input be any more effective than stakeholder input?

Various citizen participation models or "ladders" have been developed which depict the relationship between decision makers and citizens (Arnstein, 1969; Conner, 1988; Chess, Hance, & Sandman, 1988); and Potapchuk, 1991). Similar themes emerged from these ladders: (a) power relations between "powerless citizens" and the "powerful" decision makers, (b) separation of leader or decision maker roles from those of the citizens or general public, (c) a continuum of power and consultation including control and manipulation to shared decision making, (d) one-way selective communication from decision makers to citizens, (e) limited roles and opportunities for citizens to be involved in decision making, and (f) inconsistencies in the way public consultation and participation is viewed. Some of these same themes also appear in the stakeholder participation literature. The challenge on the one hand, is striving for a more democratic process involving more stakeholders or citizens, while on the other hand, finding the balance between effective and efficient decision making processes and the right types and numbers of participating stakeholders or citizens. The benefits of including citizens includes an increase in cooperation amongst diverse and often unrelated groups, a reduction in alienation and power struggles (Wharf & McKenzie, 1998), an increased understanding and respect for different perspectives, more balanced decisions, a contribution to society's "civic sense" (Kushner & Rachlis, 1998, p. 306), and empowerment of individuals and communities (Labonte, 1992).

The following literature review provides more details about the various political and other influences in education decision-making processes, and the stakeholders involved who want to have input or want to be a part of education curriculum and policy reform.

Critical View of the Role of Education, Schools, and Pedagogy

Although the aims of education are nonpolitical, with an emphasis on knowledge and people's beliefs and values towards the betterment of society through our children, critical pedagogy emphasizes the political realities of education and their effect on students and schooling. Because it is difficult to remove the politics from education, critical theorists are pessimistic about education making any moves away from the traditional obsolete approaches and moving towards more emancipatory processes (Hlebowitsh, 1991; Swartz, 1996; Wardekker & Miedema, 1997). In fact, critical theorists view education as suppressive, particularly when students are taught what to think rather than how. Emancipatory pedagogy is based on posing and solving problems that arise from everyday experiences. And in this process,

> Students are viewed as critical agents able to combine scholarship with personal and cultural knowledge of themselves and others in order to liberate themselves from the control of social constructions or institutions whose 'business as usual' would inequitably affect their opportunities and life chances. (Swartz, 1996, p. 399)

The goal of emancipatory pedagogy is to transform the traditional role that schools and schooling have played by acknowledging the emancipatory role which students must play while they are in as well as out of school.

Schools are a prime example of what Foucault called a *panopticon*, in which all the elements of panopticism exist, including knowledge/power, disciplinary power, subjectification, normalization, productivity, docile bodies or docility, and governmentality (Ball, 1990; Foucault, 1977b; Hunter, 1996; Marshall, 1989; Ransom, 1997; Ryan, 1991; Simons, 1995). For each of these aspects, the panopticon provides the type of building or environment which condones hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement, and examinations (Simons, 1995, p. 31).

> Among school children it makes it possible to observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying), to map attitudes, to assess characters, to draw up rigorous classifications, and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish "laziness and stubbornness" from "incurable imbecility." (Foucault, 1977b, p. 203)

Governance and government control of the panopticon school is also easier because not only the students are observed, but also the principals, teachers, school boards, and other stakeholders (Marshall, 1989). One can in fact safely say that because all levels of the school system are hierarchical and bureaucratic, the panopticon effect is evident from the top down. The panopticon, as viewed within the school system, implies the power/knowledge relationship along with other qualities of panopticism. The power/knowledge along with normalization are key aspects of the educational process which go a long way in supporting the development of modern society (Ball, 1990). "Genealogy and the analysts of power relations will reveal, according to Foucault, the normalizing functions of schools" (Marshall, 1989, p. 110). Within the school panopticon, there are individuals at various levels of the power-knowledge spectrum. Students are the attentive recipients of education, who are observed, judged on normalization, and examined. Discipline and power are self-acknowledged as a result of the students gaining knowledge and subjecting themselves to various experiences in the normalization and standardization processes. Foucault (1988), in his lecture on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, stated that a critical function of self-cultivation is to unlearn or to get rid of all bad habits, following which the individuals will struggle to shape themselves and self-cultivate in a therapeutic or curative manner. The student/learner relies on a teacher/mentor for direction and knowledge in cultivating and shaping decisions for the self.

Teachers, on the other hand, are the observers, the judges, and the examiners of the students. They are, in a sense, the administrators of the classroom and the curriculum with the power to discipline as well as influence the social and physical conditions of students for a good portion of the student's life (Kritzman, 1988). Marshall (1989) suggested that teachers impose their power on the students, which is viewed as repressive. He also proposed that power acts on the students' belief systems, and perhaps not always in the best interests of students, or legitimate interests. Foucault (1988), however, suggested that because power is not owned by anyone, including the government or teachers, it exists as a relationship in positively promoting pleasure, acting on action which can be resisted and not on beliefs, working at the lowest micro-level in society as opposed to top-down, and not focusing on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of power in acting on people's actions. "Hence power is to be understood not in terms of a social contract between sovereign and individual but in terms of the politics of every day life" (Marshall, 1989, p. 105).

Schools set the framework for disciplinary power through their panopticism (Ryan, 1991), which includes (a) allocating to students spaces within the school in the community and within classrooms specifically; (b) timetabling schedules and activities which are planned as part of the curriculum; (c) requiring commands and instructions to move students through the school and through course work; and (d) breaking down activities into objectives, tasks, and skills for which instruction is provided and examinations given (Marshall, 1989). This structured process not only produces docile students of knowledge and discipline, but also produces docile teachers as professionals of knowledge and discipline in following through the structured programs (Goodson & Dowbiggin, 1990).

The pedagogy, which includes the curriculum as one aspect of discipline as well as of the power/knowledge relationship, is dominated by specific discourses which determine the books to be used, the classroom or instruction approaches to be employed, the evaluation process, and the values or beliefs to be transmitted to students (Ball, 1990; McLaren, 1989).

> From the perspective of critical educational theorists, the curriculum represents much more than a program of study, a classroom text, or a course syllabus. Rather, it represents the *introduction to a particular form of life; it serves in part to prepare students for dominant or subordinate positions in the existing society*. (McLaren, 1989, p. 183)

In addition to the obvious reasons for curriculum in promoting learning, education also provides the medium for values and culture to evolve, including some discriminatory displays and other more unintended outcomes or more subtle ways in which knowledge and behavior get constructed. This process is referred to as the *hidden curriculum* (p. 183). Although schools play a major role in the political and cultural development of students, there is an ongoing struggle for dominance among various cultural, social, and political constructions of schooling. The criticism, of course, is that educational institutions cannot develop individuals in a complete or holistic fashion (Hunter, 1996). The school is not the only educational facility or environment for most individuals. Individuals participate in activities of other institutions which also contribute to personal development. These latter institutions, including churches and other community centers, may also be panopticons in their own way and will observe not just the children, but also their parents, families, and neighbors to gain information on the way of life, resources, morals, and so on (Foucault, 1977b).

Unfortunately, schools, like other community institutions, have their limitations. In their attempts to apply discipline continually and systematically, they also produce inequalities in productivity and docility (Ryan, 1991) and in the development of critical and active citizens (McLaren, 1989). Although critical theorists would say that their goal is "to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (p. 160), very few academics and teachers would declare this as their goal. Rather, both the structure of schooling and its outcomes are the product of a whole range of individual and group initiatives, aspirations, ambitions, and enterprises that may or may not clash. Even so, according to Foucault:

> The actions of individuals and groups—teachers, parents,administrators, students, government officials, special interest groups—take shape and are given direction within these technologies of power, which in turn operate subject to the strategic relationships produced not only by schools but by society in general. However, like prisons, schools may produce effects that contradict officially stated aims. This is particularly true in the case of the production of inequalities. (Ryan, 1991, p. 115)

One of the ways in which parents and interest groups have responded to some of the inequalities perceived in schools is to lobby for the establishment of private or charter schools and to therefore shift some of the power associated with knowledge and discipline choices to themselves (Kenway, 1990). "Privatization is a key concept and the central ethic is 'possessive individualism,' in which individual freedom is interpreted as the right to accumulate private property and power unimpeded by the state" (p. 169). Ryan (1991) suggested that as long as schools remain structured as panopticon organizations, there will always be the structured power/knowledge, discipline, and normalization processes in place, which inevitably will lead to inequalities for individuals in that cultural, social, and political context. Foucault, in all his work, has utilized historical backdrops and multidisciplinary approaches in an attempt to expose the present nature and effects of truth, power/knowledge, domination, and ethics related to social and political institutions, including formal schools.

Politics of Education: Curriculum and Policy Reform

Politics has been a constant in education, including processes involving the curriculum and policies. However, there are other variables which contribute to the complex nature of educational reform. For example, economics, public interests, human and other resources, and social policies are interwoven with politics and are influential in the outcomes of education goals, curriculum, schools, and policies.

Politics of Education and Educational Reform

Under the strain of educational reform in Alberta and other Canadian provinces through the 1980s and up to the present, Canadians have had consistent reminders that education and schools have always had a pronounced political context (Crump, 1992). For example, a poll conducted in 1979 by the Canadian Education Association indicated that 40% of Canadians believed that education had worsened up to that time. About 68% of the respondents would not serve on a board of education, and 50% felt that citizens did not have adequate input into education. In addition, 56% of parents thought they should be involved in decisions affecting school goals, new programs, instruction for their children, and education committee composition. The Adams study conducted in Ontario in 1976 found that teachers wanted to exclude the public and school administration or boards from making decisions on curriculum content and delivery (Hennessy, 1985).

However, in the 1980s education in Alberta was put under the microscope by government officials, resulting in revised curricula, new philosophies, and new policy statements, including a revised Alberta School Act (1988). Economics, technology, and other environmental influences have played roles in the revision of education, its curricula, and policies. The push for educational reform, although influenced by economics and political infrastructures, has come from bottom-up movements involving individuals with self-interests, groups with common ideals and interests, and coalitions and activists with a united view of ideals, interests, and values (Apple, 1991). These diverse groups have used the political processes as their democratic right to influence the educational system (Curley, 1988; Lindquist, 1991; Pross, 1986). "Larger relations of power must always be considered if we are serious in our attempts to understand the complicated politics of education" (Apple, 1991, p. 47).

There usually are political trade-offs in education reform, in Alberta or elsewhere, particularly as governments and their ministers change with each election or as ideological patterns shift back and forth between participatory and centralized decision making or as conflicts over educational values arise from different interest groups. These are a few of the many micro- and macro-political challenges faced by education and its stakeholders. The impacts are far reaching, from the classroom where curriculum is taught, to the government education offices where curriculum and policy decisions are generally made. "And the game goes on" (Scribner, Reyes, & Fusarelli, 1994, p. 201).

According to Apple (1991), our task is not to reject the politics within education, but to recognize what is at stake for stakeholders as well as government. The balance of power in education has never been and probably never can be equal. Power becomes unequal when decisions have to be made, particularly with regard to such questions as "Who should go to school? What should be the purposes of schooling? What should children be taught? Who should decide issues of school direction and policy? Who should pay for schools?" (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1994, p. 5).

Politics of Curriculum Reform in Education

One major component of education and education reform is the curriculum content. "Whose knowledge is of most worth?" (Apple, 1991, p. 40). Education reform in the 1980s opened up a whole new meaning for "back to the basics." There was a stronger push to prepare students for the labor force, which included social and health issues. Perhaps, as Apple pointed out, the assumption was that if the curriculum reflected different cultural, traditional and Western values, and workplace norms as linked to business, industry, and technology, then all of our problems would magically be compensated for or would disappear. In some ways, as Crump (1992) indicated, the school curriculum reform movement went too far in the opposite direction from where it had started with the "basics." The problem, according to Apple (1991) and Giroux

(1991), was that education leaders had not asked the right questions about the purpose of schooling and education. If the purpose of education was to produce individuals who would be able to exercise power over their lives, what curricula would do this? (Giroux, 1991; Stout et al., 1994).

Critical pedagogy looks at education curriculum in the political and social contexts and attempts to explain the underpinnings of traditional education curricula versus what emancipatory curricula would provide in the way of citizenship functions over narrowly defined market perspectives. For example, the social relations in traditional education and its curricula

> not only inures the student to the discipline of the workplace but develops the type of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social class identifications that are crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships of education—the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work—replicate the hierarchical divisions of labor. Hierarchical relations are reflected in the vertical authority lines from administrators to teachers to students. Alienated labor is reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education, the alienation of the student from the curriculum content, and the motivation of school work through a system of grades and other external rewards rather than the student's integration with the process (learning) or the outcomes (knowledge) of the educational "production process." (Pinar & Bowers, 1992, pp. 164-165)

There are ongoing pressures from the corporate sector to underwrite school curricula that link student learning of basic skills with good job habits. This all falls under the euphemism of "investing in the future of our children" (Giroux, 1991). The Alberta high school CALM curriculum was designed to offer students job and career planning skills, as well as health and relationship skills.

To invest in our children also implies providing students with the information and skills to handle various social and health challenges. For example, providing health education and life skills management, such as in the Alberta CALM program, stresses the importance of life experiences other than work or jobs. However, the controversy surrounding health education, particularly sexual health, as part of the curriculum has raised moral and value questions and concerns that

> in every classroom there is a sexually "permissive" teacher preaching the virtues of polymorphous perversity and criticizing traditional "family values." In reality, of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Teaching about sex and sexuality is most unusually conspicuous by its absence, and when sex education has been on the agenda, it has not often been within the context of concern about morals, social hygiene, sexual purity and the promotion of motherhood. (Aggleton, 1989, p. 33)

Concerns have also been raised about HIV and AIDS education because of the context in which the disease is transmitted and certain religious beliefs about homosexuality.

There are no easy answers for what content is best or needed or appropriate for students who need to increase their awareness in order to make informed decisions about the behaviors they choose, even in the midst of controversy. Political pressures and interest groups will raise barriers to curricula containing any controversial subject, particularly in health issues (Aggleton, 1989).

Another political aspect of education relationship building is what has been referred to as the "hidden curriculum" as opposed to the "overt" or planned curriculum, those unintentional outcomes of education in which students are induced to comply with dominant forces, ideologies, and social practices related to authority, behavior, and morality (McLaren, 1989). This parallels the observations of Foucault in his description of the school as a panopticon in which students are observed, examined, socially regulated, and trained through disciplinary methods (Foucault, 1977a; Scribner et al., 1994). The goal of this traditional educational model is for teachers to cover and examine curriculum as mandated by education policies (Passé, 1996). Teachers, after all, are accountable and will protect their jobs and turf (Scribner et al., 1994) by ensuring that students do the work. Success is "assessed and displayed in a dizzying array of numerical scores posted monthly in the local newspaper" (Giroux, 1991, p. 17).

The opposite educational concept supports "student curricular decision making" (Passé, 1996, p. x). In this context, students are supported by decision makers, and teachers to participate in education curriculum design and development processes.

The possibility of making poor curricular decisions is reduced when students are given the responsibility of choosing content. Students tend to select topics that interest them, thus avoiding motivation problems. Their choices reflect their actual needs, rather than those perceived by adults. It makes for a more efficient curriculum development process.

> Curricular decision-making power belongs in the hands of students because it is their lives that are being affected—their day-to-day school lives and also their future lives. Giving them this power is not a fad, or a way for teachers to pass the buck. It is a method of developing autonomy, motivating children to learn, and developing strong citizenship skills. (Passé, 1996, p. 9)

In addition to student outcomes, evaluations of curricula, which identify the efficacy of curriculum and reform processes are aspects of curriculum and policy to which administrators and government officials are committed. Yet government decision makers must also be advocates and promoters for the curriculum they approved for implementation (Palumbo, 1987). Government decision makers are not inclined to risk failures or political embarrassment in accomplishing the goals of the education curriculum and policy. In addition, it is one thing to evaluate students' needs in curriculum reform, but quite another to have students as public stakeholders involved in the curriculum evaluation and reform process (Chelinsky, 1987; Patton, 1987).

Politics of Policy Reform in Education

"Policy is a process; not just an end-product" (Crump, 1992, p. 419). Therefore, the analysis of policies and their reformulation suggests that (a) policies are not fixed permanent texts or "omnipotent discourses" (p. 419); (b) policies can be reformed as a result of extensive pressures from public groups; and (c) stakeholders as major influencers, such as students, should be participating in policy reform.

Policy for the Education Curriculum

One of the several types of policies referred to by Kerr (1976) is essential for education as we know it—curriculum policy that specifies the content of individual courses and programs of studies. Wright (1985) defined *curriculum policy formulation* as "the process of arriving at explicit or implicit guides to action relative to curriculum. Included in such action, is the process of curriculum decision-making" (p. 38). Without curriculum policies there would be no structure, format, or capability for standardizing and testing students' outcomes. Although this type of comment might very well form the basis for justifying education practices, particularly because curriculum policy should have been developed with "some kind of rational legitimacy and authority" (Reid, 1994, p. 18), there are contenders who claim that a gap exists between the policy initiatives and the realities of how the curriculum is designed and implemented (Gehrke, Knapp, & Sirotnik, 1992; Hall & Loucks, 1982).

The gap, according to Reid (1994), exists because of the difficulty for policy making as related to curriculum design to satisfy three essential claims simultaneously: the needs of individuals, the demands of society, and the nature of knowledge. Policy makers have conceptualized some of these claims in their efforts to develop policies on what is "core curriculum" and what is not part of the core. The justification for core curriculum is that students receive the basic knowledge and skills perceived by society as being essential for life-long learning (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 1994).

Policy for the School Health Education Curriculum

School health education is one innovation which has resulted in the development of policies which attempt to assist in reducing the discrepancies between education curriculum and societal needs. Health education can be defined as a "process involved in bridging the gap between supplying people with information about health and teaching them how to use it in solving or preventing health problems" (Pollock, 1987, p. 11). For kindergarten to Grade 12 in schools, this could mean a curriculum or Program of Studies which promotes healthier individuals who will continue to contribute to society.

Health education with varying degrees of curriculum structure, formality, and curriculum policy making appears to be a high priority for schools throughout the world (Cook & Walberg, 1985). Most of the challenge in bridging the gap between policy formulation and implementation is dependent upon the priorities of the program developers and teachers as well as upon the degree of program implementation from K to 12 (Connell, Turner, & Mason, 1985). Many teachers, especially if they do not have a health background or expertise, or access to resources, will treat health education as a secondary course, often integrating it into biology, physical education, or even social studies rather than keeping it as a separate primary course (Cook & Walberg, 1985; Seffrin, 1990). However, Connell et al., Haber and Blaber (1995), Nader (1990), and Stone (1990) suggested that health education as part of the school curriculum is not adequate for addressing health issues of youth. A core health education curriculum should not only be integrated into the other core subjects, but it should also form a comprehensive school health program involving (a) school administration and services, (b) community agencies, (c) families, and (d) even the media. This perspective comes from a much broader one that justifies including health education in the schools, without losing sight of the traditional educational mandate.

> The paradox is that schools on the one hand are being asked to solve a growing list of health and social problems, while on the other hand are under increasing pressure to get "back to basics." As schools are confronted with increasing demands and diminishing resources, decisions about including health education in an already crowded curriculum will be based on its value in meeting the school's educational objectives. (Kolbe, 1986, p. 48)

However, the "real" justification for health education in schools comes from evaluation studies within schools in the United States (Connell et al., 1985; Kolbe, 1986) which reported a positive correlation between health education programs and student health status, along with improved learning achievement and performance. In addition, schools themselves are potential sources of health risk, especially without health programs in place to assist students at risk of failure or experiencing poor self-esteem, isolation, mental and physical health risks, or family problems. In Canada and the United States, these problems have been shown to result in smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, and possibly intentional or unintentional injuries to self, members of staff, fellow students, or others (Haber & Blaber, 1995; Hawkins & Catalano, 1990; Health and Welfare Canada, 1992; Leming, 1992; Nutbeam & Aaro, 1991; Pollock, 1987).

There is, however, a challenge to instituting health education in schools across Canada, because Canada does not have a centralized or national system of education, and the 10 provinces and two territories have the individual responsibility for addressing health education in the schools. In the 1990s the health education initiative was identified as a priority, particularly in the context of other political, economic, and social reforms (Matter, Ashworth, & Cameron, 1990).

One example of how public concerns may have had an effect on education policy making in Canada is the inclusion of health education within the school curriculum. Each province and territory has jurisdiction over education and reform; however, there are some national political reports and public policies which have had an impact across Canada. In the early 1970s, Lalonde (1974), then federal Minister of Health, released a report entitled *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians,* which stressed the need to address the health of our youth and adults through the "promotion and coordination of school and adult health education programs, particularly by health professionals and school teachers" (p. 67). As well, the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* (World Health Organization, Health & Welfare Canada, & Canadian Public Health Association, 1986) advocated that public health policies address community and individual needs and skills to put health promotion into action. Health and Welfare Canada (1992) researchers, after conducting a national and international survey on youth from birth to 19 years of age, concluded that more structure and comfort in dealing with youth health risk behavior is needed at both school and home. Specific interest groups such as the Canadian College of Health Services Executives and Sutherland (1990) lobbied for healthy public policies for our children.

Policy Analysis and Reform

It is one thing to have programs and policies in place, but there comes a time when they need to be reviewed and perhaps reformed, or new ones developed. Programs may or may not be evaluated in the same way or at the same time as policies. However, the processes are similar for both programs and policies, and the question of who is involved and who makes these decisions is always present.

For policies specifically, Jenkins (1978) indicated that before policy analysts begin analyzing policies, they should always ask themselves some key questions, such as, "Policy analysis or policy advocacy? Analysis *of* policy or analysis *for* policy?" (p. 30). Policy analysts should also determine why they are conducting policy studies. Is it for scientific reasons to understand causes and consequences of policy decisions and therefore improve one's knowledge about society, or for professional reasons so that social science knowledge can be applied to the solution of practical problems, or for political purposes to ensure that the "right" policies are adopted to achieve the "right" goals (Dunn, 1981). Depending upon the policy problem under investigation, the mode of policy argument should be identified. The six modes of policy argument which have been described (Dunn, 1981) can assist in transforming policy information into claims. These six modes are (a) authoritative (arguments based on authority), (b) intuitive (insight based), (c) analycentric (based on method), (d) explanatory (arguments from cause), (e) pragmatic (arguments from motivation, parallel case, or analogy), and (f) value-critical (arguments from ethics; p. 67). Once the policy problem has been identified, the analyst can begin to develop or reform the policy according to one of several models and methods described by Jenkins (1978), Dye (1978), Dunn (1981), Pross (1986), Pal (1992, 1997), Scheurich (1994), and others.

Policy Analysis Related to Policy Making

Policy analysis relating specifically to the policy-making or formulation process can take on various formats and provide different types of information. However, the overall goal of policy analysis in this instance is to provide designative or factual, evaluative, and advocative information about particular problems, which can be utilized by policy makers or others in politically appropriate positions (Dunn, 1981). Dunn in his book, *Public Policy Analysis*, provided some theoretical and practical advice for policy analysts through the methodologies and frameworks which he described. The policy analyst must first decide what the policy problem is, specifically pertaining to the policy-making process in this case. If there is a problem, the analyst must decide the methods and approaches to use in collecting the data as well as in reporting them to the appropriate and interested people.

Models of Policy Analysis

Policy stakeholders are perceived as one of three major elements of a "political policy systems model," as described by Dye (1978). The other two elements include policy outcomes or public policies and environmental forces and conditions. There are variables in each of the three elements, as well as linkages between elements to signify the effect and feedback which can occur between them. The policy analyst is able to use this model to determine various variables within each of the three elements as well as the direct or indirect relationships among them. Dye's model has been modified for use by Jenkins (1978) for illustrating the technical processes or "mechanics of policy making" (p. 50) and by Dunn (1981) as "a framework for policy analysis" (p. 46).

Of the many theories described, systems theory is often referenced, discussed, or modified for models. For example, Jenkins' (1978) systems model of the policy process offers a clear perspective of the specific policy-related activities of the political system and its processes. It is a useful model for examining the various aspects shaping policies. This model contains the following elements:

> (i) *policy demands*: demands for action arising from both inside and outside the political system.
> (ii) *policy decisions*: authoritative rather than routine decisions by the political authorities.
> (iii) *policy outputs*: what the system does, thus, while goods and services are the most tangible outputs, the concept is not restricted to this.
> (iv) *policy outcomes* (or *impacts*): consequences intended or unintended resulting from political action or inaction. (Jenkins, 1978, p. 19)
> (v) *environment*: includes social, economic and political influences on inputs, systems variables, policy outputs and policy outcomes. (p. 18)

There are other models which apply to policy analysis and impart similar kinds of information for the policy analyst (Pal, 1992, 1997; Dye, 1978).

If policies are also to be analyzed in context with other public policies, or other social, health, economic, and political changes, then policy archeology can be more appropriately applied as the method of analysis (Scheurich, 1994). Because policy archeology looks at the social construction of policy problems and changes over time, a different combination of questions, approaches, and methods apply. Scheurich (1994) suggested that "policy solutions are no longer 'real' solutions or efforts to solve social or education problems; policies are now symbolic solutions to 'latent public concerns'" (p. 299).

Policy Reformulation

Once implemented, policies require an average of seven to ten years of evaluation and feedback in order for policy makers, stakeholders, and analysts to be able to assess the need for reform. Sabatier (1986) suggested that policy review and change should take place between 10 and 20 years following initial implementation of the policy. This timeframe allows for adequate policy orientation and actual implementation; for example, within schools by the teachers and with many groups of students. Ideally, the information about the policy should be consistently gathered over the 10- or 20-year period.

Reform specific to education policies and curricula, whether for health education or other areas, will require some direction to become more successful in the long term. Tyack (1991) identified successful reforms as those which (a) do not make too many demands on teachers or operating procedures; (b) are contained in legislation, policies, laws, or regulations; and (c) are proposed, developed, and implemented by school administrators and teachers directly. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) tended to agree that success or failure of curricula and related policies has more to do with ownership of the policy-making and implementation processes than with societal, political, economic, or health issues inhibiting the process.

Political Action in Education Through Interest Groups and Partnerships

Besides the actual processes of program and policy analyses is the question of who will do the work or be involved in these processes? Who makes the decision of who to involve? There are many community-interest groups, government departments, and others to consider, not only as stakeholders, but also as potential influencers for change.

Policy Community and Interest Groups

The participants involved in the policy-making process have been termed the *policy community* (Lindquist, 1994; Pal, 1992; Pross, 1986). Pross depicted the policy community as a model in which participants include government, subgovernment, nongovernment, and "attentive public" groups. "Whereas members of the sub-government actually *make* policy, the attentive public only *influence* it" (Coleman, 1990, p. 614). Concerning education, there is a policy community consisting of various stakeholder groups which have various levels of influence or input.

The education system has undergone tremendous scrutiny by the public, business sectors, and the government over the past 15 years. During that time education has been unable to escape the political or public "panoptic eye." As Foucault (1977b) implied in his description of the panopticon, not only are the students observed, but so is the school and its bureaucratic structure in which students are taught, teachers teach, and other processes unfold day to day. "Foremost, there are differences between students and teachers in their volunteerism. Students are conscripted, while teachers are hired" (Clifton & Roberts, 1993, p. 35). The panopticon can define for education a model of power relations of the everyday life within the school or educational process. "If they are school children, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time" (Foucault, 1977b, p. 201). There is discipline, order, structure, and people with different roles and interests who watch the process unfold and try to influence it as they can.

Interest groups and parents have already restricted what disciplinary strategies will be used in the schools, and in the end, the rights of students have prevailed. "'In real life,' oppositional groups appeal to rights in their struggles against institutions and disciplines" (Ransom, 1997, p. 45). Theobald (1997), too, advocated that students should become more involved in deciding how their learning best takes place rather than being forced to accept what is given. "The idea that education prepares one for life rather than being part of life is vanishing. Indeed, learning is increasingly integrated into all parts of life" (p. 93).

Like the panopticon model, the school is a bureaucratic organization with goals linked to efficiency and effectiveness (Clifton & Roberts, 1993). And in a broad sense the citizens or members of society have supported in principle what the schools have set out as goals and objectives. Various groups, including middle-class parents, have sanctioned schools if questions arise about the outcomes and benefits to students in the long term.

> Government, bureaucracy, and professionalism have become dominant concepts in educational policy, concepts that generate the controlling values of the system and guide the behavior of its participants. They have become ends in themselves, instead of means to achieve ends grounded in values of the real parties at interest—parents, students, citizens, and teachers. (Seeley, 1985, p. 64)

The issues include reference to who controls the schools and who can influence the political and policy-making decisions which could impact all aspects of education (Marburger, 1978). For so long schools (institutions) and education (Program of Studies and policies) have been centrally controlled with top-down authority from the ministerial sector to the student (recipients) and parent stakeholders in the system. However, with the introduction of "decentralization," centralized authority is dispersed to different agencies, groups, stakeholders, and even school boards (Lauglo, 1995). This is not to imply that everyone has or would have equal authority, power, or control; some individuals or groups, by virtue of their positions and competence, would have greater power to influence or give direction. Lauglo also stated that the implications of the authority distribution in education as a result of decentralization can be problematic.

The bottom-up approach to policy decision making, although democratic and protective of individuals and group interests, also assumes that everyone, lay and professional representation, is equally balanced and equally capable of providing the necessary input for consensus on decisions (Smithson, 1983). The plurality of values within the various lay and professional groups would make consensus on decisions difficult without direction and guidance from the top. There is no guarantee that the top will acknowledge the bottom. Representatives of each lay and professional group within school districts have been locked in struggles with provincial ministries of education over power-sharing, finance, and policy issues, concerning a host of educational values, responsibilities, and functions (Bartunek, 1994, p. 7). These political issues are ongoing and need to be dealt with (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993).

Although education is viewed as a "public good" in a democratic society with individual rights being considered, in a decentralized model of authority the concept of public good and individual rights will receive competition from the marketplace, businesses, and other interest groups who also believe they have a right to influence education in the interests of the public good. Self-interests of these competitive forces could override the quality and equitable education originally set out for each child (Flaherty, 1995). Bottery (1992) outlined how a competitive market may reduce local school options either by forcing closure of the least appealing schools or by overwhelming prestigious schools. Either way, choices for students and parents will diminish, as they will for teachers and others.

The strategies needed to counter some of the problems and challenges experienced with altering the power structure within the educational system include those which are macropolitical (institutional environment), as well as micropolitical which includes interest groups and coalitions (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993). The dynamics of macropolitics includes actions which schools and education must take to handle the influences of external interest groups in the institutional environment. "As public sector organizations, schools are expected to reflect the goals, values, and culture of the broader society" (p. 442). The first step in understanding how to operate under these expectations is to identify the key interest groups in this institutional environment, assess their impact or influential ability, and determine whether their approach will be either supportive or counter-supportive of the educational goals.

Business Involvement

One major institutional interest group which has been receiving a lot of recent attention in educational circles is business. Although education has borrowed favorably from business management principles and technological expertise, it is difficult to accept the concept of business consumerism in education (Bottery, 1992). Bottery suggested that there are possibilities and also problems with students, parents, or industry as consumers. This simplistic ideology of consumerism may not be practical to the meaning or purpose of education. However, the business community has had other more direct interests and involvements in the education curriculum;

specifically, career and technology projects. Business interest groups have also participated in education policy making and curriculum design (Timpane, 1984).

> The final question for educators is the most basic: Will public education retain its integrity in the education of coming generations if the interest of business in education—both in schools and in state houses—continues to grow as dramatically as present trends suggest? So far, business leaders have suggested broad rather than narrow educational requirements and have shown little interest in the specifics of educational strategies or school operations. (p. 392)

Community and School Interest Groups and Partnerships

However, the dynamics of micropolitics involving interest groups and coalitions presents the education system and schools with other challenges. Interest groups which are commonly associated with the micropolitics of education include community groups (parents, others), the school board (superintendents, school board trustees), the administration (principals), and the teachers (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993). If each group has sufficient numbers of individuals supportive of a common view or particular public issue, interest groups will form, some becoming pressure groups with the intent of lobbying their own members as well as those in other groups to support their efforts. In this way, education coalitions also form (Curley, 1988). Many administrators, school board members, and teachers are convinced that they need help from parents and other community citizens in supporting school and program needs and budgets. There is no doubt that all groups proceed cautiously for fear of jeopardizing the school or education process for the children in the community (Marburger, 1978). When groups have had a chance to work through their fears and organize their stand on issues, values, and discourse, they have gone beyond coalitions into partnerships (Seeley, 1984). They will have legitimated their voices through their partnerships, particularly because their policy framework will account for the interests and values of teachers, administrators, board members, as well as students, parents, and citizens. It must be remembered that the community partners, parents, and other citizens will be volunteers in this process and that their voice is significant in collaborative, long-range planning (Gray, 1984).

> The voice approach accepts education as a public enterprise. . . . The other concept, family control, suggests that education will be made more effective and legitimate not by giving people more voice but by giving them more choice over schools to which they send their children. (Seeley, 1985, p. 158)

Parents

Looking specifically at parent interest groups, parents have been perceived in different ways, as "lobbyists," "pressure groups," or "special interest groups" (Davies & Zerchykow, 1981, p. 174), and also as "problems," "customers," and "partners" (Bottery, 1992, p. 110) within the education system. Although the best perception is to think of parents as partners or special interest groups sharing in a relationship which has a common goal of ultimate benefit to the child, parents are also often perceived as problems or lobbyists when they are persistent about school, child, or home issues, or as customers or pressure groups who are self-interested in only what the school should do for them and their children. There are extremes in types of interest groups that parents have been know to form—at one end of the spectrum are the informal groups, nonstructured, and "potential" interest groups (Davies & Zerchykow, 1981, p. 184), reflecting a broad range of attitudes; whereas at the other extreme are formal, organized "parent unions" which react to "institutional crises in schooling" (p. 187). These latter groups will not only be organized, but will also have the resources to try to impact educational policy.

Not all parents will take part in group activity. Some may be apathetic; others may believe the system should be left to the professionals; still others have become cynical of bureaucracy and its response to any attempts to make changes by parents (Bauch & Goldring, 1996; Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Marburger, 1978). It appears that the best approach to having parents more involved as partners would be either to invite them to participate in any number of activities or committees, either directly with their child/children in the classroom or with the school or school district. For example, parents could become involved in goal setting (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Walberg, 1989), development and implementation of curriculum, assessment aspects of education, and even policy decision making. In this latter role, parents would essentially be representing families and communities as well as their children's interests (Bauch & Goldring, 1996).

Seeley (1985) stated that an important first step for developing successful partnerships between students, parents, and school staff is to recognize that families and schools are different with different values and loyalties. Rather than viewing this as a threat, administrators should accept this as a challenge and attempt to compromise on cultural, social, or other differences so that partnerships can be established for improving education: "Extensive evidence suggests that the experiences of the home in fostering learning has declined for several decades, but cooperative partnerships between the home and the school can dramatically raise educational productivity (Walberg, 1984, p. 397). This begs the controversial but fundamental questions, "Who should control schools and make them more effective?" and "Whose interests are served by education?" (Ogawa & Dutton, 1994).

Teachers

Although Common (1985b) suggested that teachers traditionally have been reluctant to take part in curriculum reform, Miller (1996) viewed teachers as innovators and authorities of their curriculum, and therefore as reformers in the delivery of the curriculum, dependent upon the complex culture and learning dynamics of their classrooms and schools. In other situations, teachers may choose to partner with parents in making decisions together or may choose to make decisions with professional colleagues, with parents having little involvement (Bauch & Goldring, 1996). This also means that "if one believes that citizenship education is a vital function of the school, then teachers' participation is not just their right, but also their duty and responsibility; . . . teachers have an educational obligation to their pupils to be involved" (Bottery, 1992, p. 175).

Students

Students are the group that is most affected by the activities of teachers, parents, and other interest groups, internally or externally. Their lack of power in controlling education and their dependency on parental values and finances and teacher directives puts them in an awkward position of defense. Not all students will find their situations awkward because they may be content with someone else controlling their education and making decisions for them. As Bottery (1992) pointed out, with some irony, all kinds of arguments can be used to inhibit student involvement in the educational process, but ultimately students are the ones who are supposed to benefit from the education they receive. Bottery suggested that "dissent" should be taught in schools so that students can become critical reflectors of what they learn and why and can exercise their rights to participate in institutional and educational decision making. Piaget would support these concepts if the aim of education is to encourage "autonomy" (Kamii, 1984). The struggle for autonomy by students has been reflected in their resistance to the "legitimacy, power, and significance of school culture in general and instruction in particular (e.g. the overt and hidden curriculum)" (McLaren, 1985, p. 94). Student unions or grievance committees have allowed students some autonomy, but even these have reflected the rights of only certain groups of students who are not marginalized or oppressed. Students are not a homogenous group. What about those students who reject the school values as set out? "It is not possible to exercise any real power over children who reject school values to the point where their behavior makes effective lessons impossible or who do not attend at all" (Martin, 1991, p. 133).

However, all groups of students as stakeholders in education can be included in some way in curriculum implementation and evaluation. As recipients and legitimate participants, students associate with the curriculum and have an opportunity to be part of a planned change (Cheung, Hattie, Bucat, & Douglas, 1996). To what extent and to what effect is the question.

Esbensen (1991), in his article "Student Rights in Canada: Beyond Equality Issues," discussed the rights of students as a special class of citizen in the context of Canada's political and sociocultural environment. What constitutes students' rights, particularly when defined in relation to a paternalistic system? This relationship presents much confusion and raises many questions about whether students have rights or not. Esbensen raised the question, "When are students old enough to participate in the decisions that affect their own education and what constitutes fair treatment in grievances that may involve them?" (p. 200).

Other Interest Groups

A number of other education interest groups in the community may attempt to influence decision making related to policy development. Some examples include (a) school trustees and their claim to speak for the local community (Becker, 1985); (b) health educators who fear that if the CALM curriculum is eliminated from the school Program of Studies, health education and related life skills will be lost; (c) minority groups representing the community with fears that schools are not culturally sensitive and are instead ostracizing them or fostering discrimination; (d) school-level activists or coalition groups for special education and disabled students who feel that these students have a right to be in the schools as part of the regular programs (Sacken, 1991); and (d) other interest or pressure groups, activists, or lobbyists who have a community-driven issue about education and its need to be more sensitive to different social issues.

There are, however, benefits and limitations to having these various interest groups involved in education. The benefits can be seen in the positive reforms and partnerships that have come out of interest group involvement. Educators' and administrators' views of education interest groups would include such descriptors as "negative, disruptive, time-consuming, uninformed, unreasonable, myopic, emotional, and otherwise generally antagonistic to the purposes and procedures of the school district" (Steele, Working, & Biernacki, 1981, p. 259; Saxe, 1981). As Saxe pointed out, parents and other interest groups would probably have the same views of educators and administrators when it comes to sensitivities of their children and issues. For students in particular it would be difficult to access the curriculum and policy decision makers in Alberta Education, but the decision makers know how to access students. How often does this happen? "Reform is the euphemism; radical the pejorative" (Hodgkinson, 1993, p. 19).

Summary: Linking the Literature to the Study

Although the literature does not contain many specific educational case studies or examples concerning curriculum or related policies and stakeholder involvement, it does offer some critical analyses and theory perspectives concerning the sociopolitical aspects of education, education curriculum, and policy analysis and reform. From this background information one is able to argue or counter-argue the issues concerning the research questions for this study. The literature by Foucault specifically imparts some meaning to the issues of language and power, language-as-action, discourses, power relationships, knowledge/power, and frameworks for education politics, curriculum and policy analysis, and interest groups. These issues become a crucial part of the discussion on relationships and power domains in education, such as that between government decision makers and students.

The literature has provided background for basically one argument and one counter-argument. The argument is that students in the traditional educational system are not in any power (as in rank or authority) or power/knowledge (expert) position to actively voice and influence education curriculum and policy development or reform. This would suggest that the top-down or Dye's elite theory are the views that dominate in the education system. The counter-argument suggests that students do have rights and should be able to influence education reform because they are active participants in or consumers of education. They therefore should have some voice. The key issue in the counter-argument is participative democracy versus representative democracy. Which is it that is being practiced by government decision makers in Alberta Education (now Alberta Learning)? Many of the authors mentioned in the section on "Political Action in Education through Interest Groups and Partnerships" mention students as active participants or partners in the "policy community" (Pross, 1986; Seeley, 1984) or mention students' rights (Esbensen, 1991; Theobald, 1997). Cheung et al. (1996) referred to students as stakeholders in education with legitimate power based on their experiences with life and with what the schools and education have to offer.

From Foucault's perspective, students are described as power-dominated, suppressed, and docile, constantly observed in a panopticon known as the school. The school is traditionally known for its hierarchical structure, discipline, and normalizing and examining capabilities; but it also is the place in which students gain social, cultural, and other basic skills and theories which strongly influence them for the rest of their lives, good or bad. Students in the panopticon setting are set on a course of instruction in which they learn very quickly that their role as students is to comply with the teacher and school rules and that their power base is at the bottom of the hierarchy. Then, to be told that they do have voice, choice, rights, and influence in education reform is an oxymoron. In addition, to be told that they should be in partnership with government decision makers who are at the top of the hierarchy also seems impossible, and contradictory to what they have been conditioned to believe.

From the opposite point of view, emancipatory pedagogy as discussed by Swartz (1996), Hlebowitsh (1992), and Wardekker and Miedema (1997) recognizes the student as an active participant and "critical agent" (Swartz, 1996, p. 399) in education. As active agents, students would have input into their own education. And although they learn that there will be dominant and subordinate positions in existing society (McLaren, 1989), they will also learn that power is not owned by anyone or any particular group (Foucault, 1988). They will also realize that schools are not the only institution which influences them in their skills, attitudes, and values development (Foucault, 1977b; Hunter, 1996). Emancipation for students sounds great in theory, but to what extent have students been able to practice it, particularly with curriculum and policy reform?

One aspect which has surfaced several times in the literature is the democratic rights of individuals and diverse groups to influence the education system (Curley, 1988; Lindquist, 1991; Pross, 1986). The push for education reform usually comes from bottom-up movements involving individuals, groups, coalitions, or activists (Apple, 1991). Students and others are questioning the purpose and relevance of education in the present and future tenses, which, according to Apple (1991) and Giroux (1991), creates the incentive for curriculum and policy reform.

The literature also identified other political considerations for education curriculum and policy reform, particularly concerning health and life skills education, which contains sexual health and other value-laden or controversial subjects. Health for youth is not to be viewed lightly, given the recent survey data which indicate that youth are engaging in high-risk activities and that the injury and death rates are very high (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1989; Haber & Blaber, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1990; Health and Welfare Canada, 1992; Leming, 1992; Nutbeam & Aaro, 1991; Pollock, 1987). What would be the consequence if the Minister of Alberta Education had decided to eliminate the CALM program from the Alberta high school curriculum? Government decision makers are not inclined to take risks or have failures in accomplishing the goals of education (Chelinsky, 1987; Patton, 1987), particularly when the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Government of Alberta, 1985) stated that Alberta Education is "investing in the future of our children." However, Passé (1996) indicated that the curriculum development process is more efficient when students are involved as investors.

Policy analysis and reform present some different challenges when considering student participation along with teachers and parents. Because policies have traditionally been the role of government decision makers, and therefore top down, there is no guarantee that those at the top would acknowledge those at the bottom, such as students (Smithson, 1983). Essentially, the question here is that, although it would be democratic to have students involved in policy decision making, can we assume that they would be involved and that they would, in turn, be capable of providing the necessary input for decisions?

For this study, the literature provided the necessary background for a critical analysis of the answers to the research questions. Throughout the study, a critical analysis was provided of the constructs coming out of the literature which was confirmed with the clustering and framing of the major themes and categories within the data, and which formed the infrastructure for a conceptual archeological framework. For example, the perspectives of Foucault and other theorists have provided the support for arguing and counter-arguing the "Discourses and Practices" of program and policy analysis and reform, and of stakeholder involvement. Power issues were identified and would affect the relations between decision makers and stakeholders. Power issues also come into play when decision makers decide who the stakeholders in education reform are. The literature on the politics of policy and education reform involving stakeholders provided the background for the arguments concerning the "Possibilities and Alternatives" and the " Micro and Macro Considerations" of program and policy analysis and reform and stakeholder participation. Again, the literature provided the socio-political, economic, interest group, and other factors which would be part of the arguments in both sections. The literature provided the support for arguments and counter-arguments throughout the study and in the development of the conceptual archeological framework which links the issues about program and policy reform processes and the involvement of stakeholders with actual and perceived discourses and practices, possibilities and alternatives, and micro and macro considerations to the three major themes of power relations, sociopolitical issues, and power/knowledge discourse.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> School troublemakers are getting younger and more violent, says a teacher in charge of making Alberta's schools safer. . . . The Safe and Caring initiative is meant to prepare schools to prevent all forms of violence. The program, which will have cost about $1 million by 2001, develops resources for teachers and school boards, works to identify the nature and extent of school violence and examines who is responsible for promoting safer schools. Next year the annual reports of all school boards will have to include the progress they have made in discouraging violence. . . . And while the number of suspensions in the Edmonton Public School District has increased by 20 per cent and the number of expulsions has doubled so far this school year, that doesn't mean Edmonton public schools are more violent, said Colleen McClure, a consultant in leadership services with the school board. (Unland, 1999a, p. B1)

Overview

The study uses a case study design to critically analyze data obtained from various sources. Based on these data, an archeological framework for program and policy analysis and reform with stakeholder involvement, is then constructed. In this study the specific case involves the Career and Life Management (CALM 20) curriculum, its related policy which makes CALM mandatory for graduation, and student and stakeholder involvement in CALM and its policy reform processes. Details of the methods and processes are provided in this chapter. Specific considerations in the study design have been given to (a) the preliminary project work and investigation for the study, (b) the critical analysis orientation and case study design, and (c) procedures used for data collection through interviews, document analyses, and observations.

Preliminary Project Work and Investigation

In September 1997, the then Minister of Education announced a review of the kindergarten to Grade 9 (K-9) health education program. As part of work-related responsibilities, I was invited to participate in the K-9 Health Program Review Meeting at Alberta Education in October 1997. Shortly after, another announcement came from the Minister that the CALM curriculum was to be assessed through consultations to see if it should be removed from the high school curriculum. When this announcement was made, I became interested in following the process. Fortunately, the timing was such that a field placement could be set up for me at Alberta Education with the Program Consultant for Health Education and CALM, from January to May 1998.

At Alberta Education I began to develop a research proposal with questions regarding CALM and stakeholder input. These first questions were specifically for interviewing policy and curriculum decision makers at Alberta Education, and some informal interviews were conducted at that time. In June 1998 I became convinced that this case study was significant primarily because of a presentation made to the Standing Policy Committee on Education and Training on June 23, 1998. The presenters to this Committee included a counselor/teacher, a physician, a parent, a Concordia University student, and a high school student. They supported CALM 20 in the high school curriculum in their presentation:

> As a group of parents, students, teachers, counselors, and members of the health care community, we strongly endorse the continuance of CALM (Career and Life Management) 20, or a living skills course similar in concept to CALM 20, as a requirement for the high school diploma. We believe that there are fundamental concepts, skills, and attitudes that high school students need, which can only be addressed, discussed and developed through this course. (Committee to Keep CALM 20, 1998)

By the end of this field placement it had become even more obvious to me that there were many more stakeholders in the education process than just the decision makers at Alberta Education. This was especially noticeable with a curriculum review involving a course such as CALM and a policy which makes this course mandatory for graduation

The significance of conducting a study regarding stakeholder involvement in curriculum and policy reform became evident through the field placement, the presentation to the Standing Policy Committee, and the pilot. The decision makers at Alberta Education were interested in learnings about the perceptions of colleagues, politicians, and other education stakeholders regarding CALM 20 specifically, but also about the level of student and other stakeholder involvement in curriculum and policy reform and decision-making processes. Over the course of the study my interest moved to focus specifically on student involvement in these processes.

Critical Analysis Orientation

In this study, I employed a critical analysis orientation to the construction of an archeological framework for program and policy analysis, based on data from a single case example. I wanted to explore the relationships between people and principles or actions, based not only on past and current understandings and events, as in archeology, but also on an analysis of events and changes recommended to improve discourses and discursive practices of those in the position of power (political or otherwise) to make decisions and changes. I also wanted to see how decision makers involved others as stakeholders in these processes. What are these trends and patterns in attitudes and practices which can be portrayed in an archeological framework for program and policy analysis?

Communication regarding all points of view is an important aspect of researching the relationship between what exists and what should exist, based on changing societal foundations. I used critical analysis rather than critical theory as an orientation. My philosophy is to look at sociopolitical and other issues from a critical analysis orientation, employing different critical theorist and analyst perspectives. This gave me different arguments and perspectives to compare. However, I did not use the philosophy, orientation, and arguments of only those who fit the label of *critical theorists*. I could through critical analysis argue and counter-argue from different perspectives. McLaren (1985) stated that "critical theory helps us focus simultaneously on both sides of a social contradiction" (p. 166). Critical analysis does the same thing—applied to an interaction, critical analysts are interested not only in what has been revealed by the participants and documents, but also in what has been concealed and to what purpose. Both critical theory and analysis discuss power relations in human interest cases, although critical theory may be credited with more of an opposition to authorities by exposing them and their limitations directly and overtly (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982).

In the end the function of critical analysis is to expose "how some individuals and groups have access to resources and others do not; why some groups are underrepresented and others are not; why certain influences prevail and others do not" (Scheurich & Imber, 1991, p. 305). Specifically in education curriculum and policy analysis involving government, different stakeholders, and students, this research study attempted to critically explore why processes may or may not include students, how students are involved if they are, and what the challenges and outcomes are related to student and stakeholder participation in curriculum and policy reform. I employed a case study design to obtain the data for the development of the framework.

Case Study Design

> A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group. The bounded system, or case, might be selected because it is an instance of some concern, issue, or hypothesis. (Merriam, 1988, p. 9)

Merriam described the four characteristics which are essential for qualitative case studies as follows:

> *Particularistic* means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent.

> *Descriptive* means that the end product of a case study is a rich, "thick" description of the phenomenon under study.
> *Heuristic* means that case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known.
> *Inductive* means that, for the most part, case studies rely on inductive reasoning. Generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses emerge from an examination of data—data grounded in the context itself. (pp. 12-13)

Because case studies focus on the examination of events which have some behavioral components, there are many different approaches or techniques which can be used to gather data, including direct observation, systematic interviewing, gathering of documents and artifacts, and combinations of these (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994).

A case study design provided some realistic containment within the broad domain of program and policy analyses and stakeholder involvement, by focusing on one specific example. Although the research and study questions can be general to program and policy analyses, a case study design provides the means to apply the study questions to specifically targeted interest groups and individuals. Furthermore, the case study can provide unique snapshots of events, experiences, and influencing factors in a specific program and policy analysis example. The snapshots are obtained through interviews, document analyses, and field observations and notes. Different attitudes, patterns, trends, actions, and other influencing factors in program and policy analysis and stakeholder involvement can be assessed through case studies and applied in a general sense through appropriate frameworks or models.

Data Collection

Data were collected for this study using a variety of means. As stated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992),

> Qualitative researchers depend on a variety of methods for gathering data. The use of multiple-data-collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the data. This practice is commonly called "triangulation" and may also involve the incorporation of multiple data sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives in order to increase confidence in research findings. (p. 24)

During my field placement at Alberta Education, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity (a) to attend committee meetings (K-9 Health Curriculum Advisory Committee, January and March 1998), (b) to develop a survey for CALM 20 (January 1998), (c) to do secondary document and archival analyses (January to April 1998), (d) to work closely with Alberta Education Health Program Staff and interview them (April 1998), and (e) to participate in consultations with stakeholders in Edmonton and Red Deer (Red Deer Consultation for K-9 and

CALM 20, February 1998). I kept a journal of observations, activities, discussions, committees, and consultations which became part of my data collection. In addition, some primary documents were gathered from the various activities and meetings (Executive Summary and CALM responses to Survey for the Programs Assessment Advisory Committee to the Deputy Minister, April 1998). Although I started with gathering primary and secondary documents for my initial data analysis, I utilized my other experiences at Alberta Education to develop study questions for interviews and focus groups as well.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is the least obtrusive technique for acquiring data (Berg, 1995). Primary and secondary archival report and document analysis proves to be one of the best initial sources of historical, contextual, and authority-based information (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Haggerson & Bowman, 1992) which can be quickly gathered, sorted, analyzed, and summarized in descriptive or tabular form. This is especially good for identifying chronological events. This information in turn can be used to guide the process of understanding the historical and current phenomena in the data regarding curriculum and policy decision making, as well as to guide the observations and the formation of questions for the interviewing and focus group processes:

> Archeologists reconstruct life in past times by examining the documents left behind. . . . Documents provide both historical and contextual dimensions to your observations and interviews. They enrich what you see and hear by supporting, expanding, and challenging your portrayals and perceptions. Your understanding of the phenomenon in question grows as you make use of the documents and artifacts that are a part of people's lives. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, pp. 52-54)

For this study, documents were gathered primarily from archives in libraries and through staff at Alberta Education. These documents were secondary documents. However, I did collect some primary documents while attending meetings and consultations. There were not many of the latter. The documents I gathered provided an overview of the actual past and current events and outcomes from them. These documents are summarized in Chapter 6. In addition to the data, names of key decision makers and other participants were obtained from attached lists, which then provided me with names of potential interviewees.

Interviews and Focus Groups

As a result of the my work at Alberta Education, I developed three sets of questions for semi-structured interviews involving (a) decision makers (bureaucrats at Alberta Education and politicians), (b) students (high school students and alumni), and (c) others, including teachers, parents, and health professionals. The questions were designed to reflect the understandings of participants regarding curriculum and policy analysis and reform processes, and their role in these processes. The questions were piloted through informal conversation-type interviews with individuals at Alberta Education, students, alumni, a consultant and former teacher with Edmonton Public Schools, a parent, and a health professional from Edmonton. Based on the pilot, the questions were refined, and I gained access to names of decision makers to interview as well as access points to schools, post-secondary institutions, and health professionals. The different sets of study questions are contained in Appendix B.

One-to-one interviews were conducted with 11 current and retired decision makers at Alberta Education and with the government, as well as with 10 other stakeholders. In all 14 focus group interviews were held. They were primarily conducted with high school students (22) and recent alumni (14), and with teachers (19), parents (3), and public health professionals (8). All interviews and focus group discussions were audiotaped, averaging 1.5 hours each. Prior to the official interviews and focus group discussions, a pilot study was conducted within each group to test the relevancy of the initial research questions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Yin, 1994), as well as to check out my comfort level with the questions and the observation process. This also provided an opportunity to assess the kinds of responses that participants gave to the questions.

The individual interviews and focus group discussions did have some structure based on the prepared questions, but also allowed for flexibility in exploring various issues as they arose (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The questions were distributed to interviewees and participants prior to the taping. This allowed the participants to review and prepare their responses, and allowed me to rephrase questions as needed and to explore others through the conversations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This process also provided an opportunity for validating information.

Selecting, accessing, and establishing rapport with the participants was part of the challenges in this study (Measor, 1985). Selection of policy and decision makers in the Alberta Department of Education and in government was done through "snowball" or network techniques (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 27) such as word-of-mouth and through personal contacts, or through documents and records. Participants for the focus groups were obtained through nonrandom or volunteer selection in urban and rural schools and postsecondary institutions. Focus groups were difficult to set up, even with a sample pool of nursing or education students at the university. Focus groups also required more skill to facilitate, particularly to ensure that all participants had a chance to comment. The pre-session distribution of questions to participants helped as an extension of the focus group by providing participants with the opportunity to write out or think out their answers more thoroughly (Berg, 1995). The numbers of interviews and focus group discussions were dependent upon the historical and research data collected, as well as upon additional names suggested during interviews. The availability of individuals and groups to participate in interviews and focus groups was also a timing challenge. "Moreover, the strategy of participant selection in qualitative research rests on the multiple purposes of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding—and on the researcher's own imagination and judgement" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 27).

There were obvious challenges in setting up the interviews and focus groups for the study. These were noted as some of the limitations for the study. Some of these challenges included accessing schools during certain times of the school year, recruiting parents, accessing alumni students, and generally getting sufficient numbers of participants to ensure the study's credibility. After many attempts at recruiting participants, I made a decision to end the search. Final numbers for interviews were as follows: 11 decision makers (seven from Alberta Education and two retired, three politicians, one Curriculum Consultant), three teachers (urban, rural, and outreach), two alumni students (both in postsecondary institutions), four health professionals, and one parent. For the focus groups, the following numbers of participants were obtained: one focus group of two teachers (outreach school), two focus groups in urban schools (one group of five and another of seven teachers), one focus group of two teachers (rural school), one focus group of two parents (rural), two focus groups of two health professionals in each, two focus groups of alumni students (10 in one and 2 in another), three focus groups of students in urban schools (five in each), one focus group of outreach students (five students), and one focus group in a rural school (two students).

Participant Observation

Observations and field notes recorded the setting, participants in the setting including their gestures or reactions and actions, events, and other activities worth noting for future analysis.

> When one is involved with participant observation, one is able to observe the naturally unfolding worlds of the population under study. This [involvement] includes those times when several parties in the field come together to spontaneously hold a conversation, discussion or argument. (Berg, 1995, p. 74)

My field notes are records of such observations. I was a participant observer during my field practicum as well as in several committee meetings, consultation processes, and other activities at Alberta Education. I also attended schools (rural, urban, and outreach) for meetings with teachers, students, and parents, and public health clinics to talk with public health nurses. I kept notes of these meetings. They helped refresh my memory about events and in particular people's attitudes to the topics we discussed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was interpretive and descriptive for all methods of data collection. The primary and secondary archival report and document analysis provided a descriptive historical account of the CALM curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation in the 1980s and 1990s, along with policy formulation and other parallel events in Alberta. The 1998 field placement and follow-up regarding the CALM program review process provided the most accurate information about student participation, because I was an observer in many aspects. Additional data were collected from written answers to the questions provided prior to conducting the taped interviews and focus groups. The interview and focus-group audio recordings were all professionally transcribed and cross-referenced to other data sources.

The data were systematically collected and analyzed, paragraph by paragraph, based on the study questions (Appendix B). Documents were assessed for common themes and categories. Interview and focus group transcripts were initially coded and categorized. Categories were then summarized for each participant, which was followed by another condensed summary by general participant group identifiers such as *decision makers* (either Alberta Health bureaucrat or politician), *students* (high school or alumni), *teachers* (rural, urban, or outreach), *parents*, or *health professionals*. Strauss and Corbin (1994) stressed:

> Coding procedures—including the important procedures of constant comparison, theoretical questioning, theoretical sampling, concept development, and their relationships—help to protect the researcher from accepting any of those voices on their own terms, and to some extent forces the researcher's own voice to be questioning, questioned, and provisional. (p. 280)

The clustered categories which emerged from the analysis of documents, transcripts, and observations were identified and reported under four core constructs. I therefore needed at least four layers or areas in my conceptual framework. There were also some unique stand-alone categories or concepts I considered significant to define the conceptual framework (Ely, 1991). The four constructs, as originally identified in the data and confirmed in the literature were given "best fit labels" (Strauss, 1987) of "the issues—pertaining to program and policy analysis and reform processes, and stakeholder involvement in them," "discourses and practices," "alternatives and possibilities," and "micro and macro considerations." "Recommendations" also came out of each construct. A more extensive analysis of the categories and the data identified three major themes—*power relations, sociopolitical issues,* and *power/knowledge discourse.* It was significant to find these major themes from the analysis of the categories within each of the constructs. The result was the formation of a conceptual framework using the issues (first construct) as the parameters, the other three constructs as layers, and the major themes as interconnections. Recommendations also came out of the data and framework. As Strauss stated:

> The core category has several important functions for generating theory. It is relevant and works. Most other categories and their properties are related to it, which makes it subject to much qualification and modification. In addition, through these relations among categories and their properties, it has the prime function of *integrating* the theory and rendering it *dense* and *saturated* as the relationships are discovered. These functions then lead to theoretical *completeness*—accounting for as much variation in a pattern of behavior with as few concepts as possible, thereby maximizing parsimony and scope. The analyst should consciously look for a core variable when coding data. While constantly comparing incidents and concepts, he or she will generate many codes, being alert to the one or two that might be the core. (p. 35)

The core constructs and categories are explained and described in Chapters 4 through 8, and the conceptual framework with the major themes as interconnections is described in Chapter 9.

Throughout the analysis I focused on how things were said and therefore made sense, as well as on what was said or not said (Weber, 1985). If I had additional questions, and felt that the data was not saturated, additional interviews took place as required (Merriam, 1988). Member checks with the transcribed data and summaries were done. All interviewed participants and, wherever possible, the focus group participants received transcripts and the condensed summaries to review and send back any changes or comments, along with another consent letter which is attached as part of Appendix C. This also helped with the validity of data (Stake, 1995). Some additional comments and changes were passed back, particularly from the decision makers. These additional data were critically examined with the transcripts and summaries and included in the descriptions and discussions around language and perceptions related to power relations, sociopolitical issues, knowledge/power discourse, and recommendations. The intention was to thoroughly exhaust the identification of categories that would support the constructs and themes which formed the conceptual archeological framework concerning program (curriculum) and policy analysis and reform processes, and stakeholder (students) involvement in them.

Archeological Approach to Framing Data

In this study I have employed an archeological framework to link all aspects of the study as well as assist in identifying the issues in a theoretical framework. Through an archeological approach different layers of questions, information and data, sociopolitical issues, themes, and theories are uncovered. The archeological approach offered me the flexibility to explore existing data as well as seek additional information. This systematic process of data collection and analysis therefore helped me identify whether additional documents needed to be accessed, whether further interviews needed to be conducted and with whom, and what additional focus groups were needed.

Originally, the framework selected for application in this study was Scheurich's (1994) policy archeology model, which incorporates Foucault's archeological perspectives. Scheurich's archeological methodology looks at the social construction of policy problems and changes over time and supports a critical analysis of the underlying sociopolitical issues identified with policies. Scheurich (1994) stressed that policies are not "real" solutions to solve education or social problems, but are instead symbolic solutions to "latent public concerns." Archeology in this sense is not necessarily time bound, although past events may have a significant effect on current and future events. The primary goal of archeology, as described by Scheurich and Foucault, emphasizes the importance of the sociopolitical context of issues and policies as background (hidden) and foreground (catalyst) for other problems or issues.

Policy archeology takes a different approach to policy analysis. The methodology used by Scheurich (1994) has been broken down into four arenas of study, as follows:

> Arena I. The education/social problem arena: the study of the social construction of specific education and social problems.
> Arena II. The social regularities arena: the identification of the network of social regularities across education and social problems.
> Arena III. The policy solution arena: the study of the social construction of the range of acceptable policy solutions.
> Arena IV. The policy studies arena: the study of the social functions of policy studies itself. (p. 300)

The policy analyst can apply one or several of the arenas depending upon the policy problem being analyzed. Because policy archeology is a relatively new approach, the analyst would be breaking new ground in applying it, although Scheurich (1994) claimed that policy archeology can be applied in traditional as well as post-positivist policy studies.

In education policies, for example, the link between sociopolitical issues and their influence on the curriculum development or reform processes becomes one of the elements in determining the arenas or perhaps layers which the archeological process reveals. The various categories and themes arising from the collected data are discussed in the context of these archeological arenas or layers using Foucauldian and critical perspectives. Foucault (1972), too, preferred archeology to history in discussing issues which might disclose some unvoiced practices because it focuses on what was said and on the actual practices in society, as opposed to an object or history of ideas.

Like Scheurich (1994), I am inclined to acknowledge Foucault's (1972) critical interpretations of social discourses and practices, but I found Scheurich's policy archeology model difficult to apply when framing the research and study questions and when attempting to relate this model to the data. I specifically found it difficult to use the arenas in Scheurich's model to generally define how program and policy analysis and reform, and stakeholder involvement fits. I therefore adapted the model and used the core constructs, derived from the data and supported by the literature, as initial layers, instead of the arenas as frames for the analysis. For this study, the four constructs and related categories emerged along with three major themes and recommendations. These formed the archeological framework and the basis of the critical analysis. From Foucauldian and critical thinkers' perspectives, archeology identifies the social construction of student involvement in education curriculum and policy reform and sheds light on the argument of why students are or are not involved. Foucault's (1972) archeological arguments can also be discussed in terms of looking at discourse, language use, knowledge/power, and power relations, as well as past or historical events associated with program (curriculum) and policy development and stakeholder (student) involvement.

Tests of Trustworthiness and Rigor

Qualitative research must be no less rigorous than quantitative research for it to be trustworthy. This is particularly true when the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, and researchers are difficult to calibrate (Montgomerie, 1994), or as Guba (1981) said, there are "problems of the human as instrument" (p. 75). Tests of rigor or trustworthiness include validity, reliability or consistency, and generalizability. These are not new concepts in research. Stake (1995) defined *trustworthiness* as

> [involving] plausibility, consistency, interconnectedness, and accurate detail—in short, validity. To assure plausibility requires providing procedures in the research design to corroborate information, check accuracy of the investigator's developing perceptions and insights, and validate the thick description of the situation produced by the study against the judgments of knowledgeable independent sources. Prolonged data collection, triangulation, member checks, collection of referential adequacy materials, developing thick-description, and obtaining independent feedback from peers are among the procedures recommended for consideration in ensuring the adequacy of a naturalistic research design. Maintaining a detailed audit trail was also stressed as essential to the trustworthiness of naturalistic study. (p. 122)

I used several strategies to ensure rigor was in place, while at the same time recognizing the limitations of the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). One means of ensuring rigor was the triangulation of data from documents, interviews and focus group discussions, participant and other observations, and the recent CALM curriculum and policy discussions and practices to corroborate the constructs, themes, and categories, and therefore ensure trustworthiness and validity. According to Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), truth emanates from the interaction between the researcher, the data of an inquiry obtained through various sources (human and nonhuman), and the phenomenon these data represent. In this study, the truth was dependent upon documentation (nonhuman sources), observations and field notes, and human sources. In the latter, truth comes not only from the underlying themes and categories based on the participants' common assumptions and beliefs, but also from differences in individual's perceptions and understandings of issues. Therefore, strategies to ensure credibility of human data included (a) tape recording the participants' responses; (b) verifying the information in the transcripts with participants, as in "member checks" (Guba, 1981, p. 80); (c) obtaining the participants' permission to use their transcripts and summaries; (d) comparing themes and categories to other documents and records; and (e) reviewing findings of interviews, focus group discussions, documents, and field notes with study Advisory Committee members.

Ely (1991) and Merriam (1988) suggested the same kinds of things for internal validity checks. By definition, *internal validity* looks at whether or not the study findings match reality or are realistic (Merriam, 1988; Rubinson & Neutens, 1987). Guba (1981) suggested that *credibility* is an alternate term for internal validity. In the proposed study the data coming from three sources should reveal a realistic link between what perceptions existed and what actually happened in curriculum and policy reform where students or others were concerned. Although I was intimately involved in the study, the data collected from the various sources and the cross-referencing of information should substantiate what was actually said or done and by whom generally.

Reliability refers to the consistency in which the study findings can be repeated or replicated (Merriam, 1988). Guba (1981) interpreted consistency as dependability based on the stability found in repeated information and on the ability to track and explain variances in data. In qualitative research, reliability has been closely associated or linked with internal validity, and therefore, one cannot have internal validity without reliability. The fact that these two go together means that the test for internal validity simultaneously indicates the presence of reliability. To ensure reliability or dependability, the researcher ensures an audit trail of documentation, tapes and related transcripts, coding sheets, and summaries of transcripts with categories and themes based on questions asked. The justification for coding categories goes back to the archeological framework and the layering of ideology. The study or interview questions were reviewed and refined with advisors and piloted prior to the study's implementation. Transcripts and summaries were all reviewed with participants. Coding and categories were discussed with my supervisor for the conceptual archeological framework and the coding of questions and responses.

Would another researcher be able to replicate the findings based on the method? It would depend upon the researcher, the research questions posed, the data collection methods used, and proposed conceptual framework which the researcher chooses to follow. In this study the conceptual framework, constructs, and categories are flexible and allow for creativity in exploring program and policy analysis and stakeholder involvement.

For *external validity*, or *generalizability*, the researcher looks for the applicability of findings to other studies. In this study "the use of sampling, predetermined questions, and specific procedures for coding and analysis enhances the generalizability of findings in the traditional sense" (Merriam, 1988, p. 174). This study used a number of different groups or participants which broadened the chances for finding similarities or differences in responses to similar types of questions. This should enhance the generalizability or transferability of findings. It is hoped that the process involved in this study and perhaps some of the findings will be generalizable to other situations involving (a) stakeholders or students and decision makers for programs and policies and (b) the conceptual archeological framework itself. However, as Guba (1981) pointed out, it is not always possible to make generalizations in qualitative studies which will hold in all places and in all times. The researcher "does not attempt to form generalizations that will hold in all times and in all places, but to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending upon the degree of 'fit' [similarity] between the contexts" (p. 81). If generalizability along with trustworthiness and reliability are shown to be in place through various checks, then the chances of the study being believed by the study participants and others reading the final report will increase.

Finally, the issue of *neutrality* or *confirmability* addresses the question, "How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on, of the inquirer?" (Guba, 1981, p. 80). This issue is once again best addressed by cross-referencing between the documents, tapes and transcripts, and observation notes. Cross member checks and the paper audit trail should help to ensure that the findings depict those responses from the study participants and the documents from archival or other sources. The participants received a copy of their transcript and my summary notes to verify or correct as required. They signed a letter agreeing to the contents and use of the information in the transcripts and summaries (Appendix C).

Ethical Considerations

"Research codes of ethics address individual's rights to dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 110). Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Alberta, Department of Educational Policy Studies. In fact, several ethics review committees were part of this study in order to access public institutions and participants. Approval through the Cooperative Activities Program in Edmonton Public School District and Elk Island Public Schools was granted November 3, 1998. Access to the Edmonton Catholic School Board was restricted due to overwhelming requests for research projects. To access health professional students at the university, the researcher had to receive approval from the Health Research Ethics Board. The approval came January 21, 1999. A final ethics review to access health professionals in the Capital Health Authority was approved February 9, 1999. In order to access the various participants, these ethics review approvals had to be in place. The approvals were for the project itself, access to participants, and, most important, the participants' informed consent through letters, questions, and consent forms to be signed and kept on file.

Because humans are involved, an ethics review is necessary to ensure respect for confidentiality and the rights of the participants (Merriam, 1988). Ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge either during the data-collection phase or during the distribution of findings for confirmation and thesis writing. This may be especially true with the interviews of government decision makers, less so with those who are retired than with those still in office, and less so with other participants who are less at risk for discussing their perceptions or views. The key issue to government officials is the boundary of private versus public information. Will there be an appearance of deception if a government official discloses? Following ethical considerations should prevent this from happening to the interviewee or focus group participants (Davitz & Davitz, 1967). Informed consent was part of this study. Each participant in this study was provided, verbally as well as in writing, with a copy of the project overview (letter), along with a consent form outlining the conditions and assurances for confidentiality and anonymity (documents are contained in Appendix C).

> Informed consent entails informing the research subjects about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. Informed consent further involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the subject, with his or her rights to withdraw from the study at any time, thus counteracting potential undue influence and coercion. (Kvale, 1996, p. 112)

Informed consent should also protect participants and researchers from going too far beyond the boundaries of the template questions and proposed study, particularly where a study, such as this one, is more semistructured, and questions can be posed which are not on the template.

Merriam (1988) suggested that researchers be aware of the following additional problems:

> - Problems of the researcher becoming involved in the issues, events, or situations under study.
> - Problems over confidentiality of data.
> - Problems stemming from competition between different interest groups for access to and control over the data.
> - Problems concerning publication, such as the need to preserve the anonymity of subjects.
> - Problems arising from the audience being unable to distinguish between data and the researcher's interpretation. (p. 179)

As researcher I attempted to address each of the above ethical considerations prior to the study or as they arose. As part of the study, I had a vested interest in its outcomes and tried to refrain from participating actively in the interviews and focus group discussions, other than to ask questions and facilitate discussions. As stated previously, confidentiality and anonymity were discussed with all participants prior to their consent to participate. Assurances for participant confidentiality and anonymity have been maintained in the thesis, in which the only identifiers include positions such as decision makers (Alberta Education bureaucrats or politicians), students (high school or alumni), teachers (rural, urban or outreach), parents, and health professionals. No names have been used in the thesis other than from published references.

The objective of this study is to inform decision makers and others who have a vested interest in educational reform about the practices and interests related to program and policy analysis and reform and stakeholder consultation or involvement. Ultimately, the findings of the research study, in the form of an Executive Summary, will be shared with the participants as well as with Alberta Learning, the former and present Ministers of Education and Learning respectively, the various Ethics Review Boards and Committees, and the participating institutions. It is the hope of the researcher to enlighten others through an understanding of this study and perhaps to encourage them to assess and alter their practices, actions, and attitudes concerning involvement in program and policy analysis, development, and reform.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides some detail of the qualitative approach and specific methodology used to conduct and analyze this study. The purpose of the study was to explore the understandings and realities concerning program and policy analysis and reform, and stakeholder involvement or consultation in these processes. The overall goal of the study was to develop a conceptual archeological framework to depict the relationship between decision making for programs and policies and stakeholder consultation or involvement. The example in this study was the CALM 20 review in Alberta high schools and the policy making it mandatory for graduation, along with student involvement in these reviews. Preliminary project work on K-9 health and CALM 20 allowed the researcher to examine processes, consultations, and other activities, which then led to the development of this study.

This study involved various methods of data collection from a variety of sources, including document analysis, interviews, and focus group discussions with a number of different stakeholders who would have an interest in education reform, particularly dealing with CALM 20. Ethical and consent considerations were applied to ensure participant rights and safety. In addition, rigor and trustworthiness were enhanced through various means.

From the research questions and data analysis, core constructs, related categories, and three major themes emerged to reflect some semblance of a conceptual framework for describing the various findings and outcomes. These constructs and categories are discussed in more detail in the next five chapters, followed by a more detailed discussion and analysis of the findings and emerging core themes, as they take the shape of a conceptual archeological framework.

CHAPTER 4

THE ISSUES IN PROGRAM AND POLICY ANALYSIS

> Alberta school children could soon be singing *O Canada* as part of their routine. Learning Minister Lyle Oberg said Monday [May 1, 2000] his department will spend the next few weeks surveying schools to find out how many regularly sing the national anthem. If he's not satisfied with the numbers who voluntarily do so, Oberg said he'll consider legislation or regulations that would make the practice mandatory. . . . In February, the public board endorsed a policy encouraging, rather than requiring, patriotic exercises such as singing the anthem and displaying the Canadian flag in schools. . . . "Of all the things that schools need right now, I don't think that directions to sing the national anthem is high on the priority list," he [Liberal education critic Don Massey] said. "I wish [Oberg] would pay as much attention to class size and the need for resources." (Jeffs, 2000, p. A1)

> Since the province moved to give schools more power to make decisions, it might be more difficult to impose a uniform policy on the national anthem, she [School board association president Lois Byers] said. (*Journal* Staff, 1999, p. A1)

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the responses of various past and current decision makers, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals to what really are the issues if any concerning the CALM review and stakeholder involvement. Two related issues were identified as part of the proposal and confirmed during the interviews and focus group discussions. The one issue was identified as the processes involving the review and reform of CALM 20 and its related policy, the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985), which states that CALM 20 is a core course and required for graduation. The second issue was identified as who or which stakeholders should be involved in the review and reform decision-making processes. More specific to this study, the issue is around whether or not students and other stakeholders should be involved in decision-making processes concerning CALM 20 and the policy which makes it mandatory for graduation.

From the discussions related to these two issues, the following conclusions were drawn for the first issue:

- Acts, regulations, and policies dictate the processes for program and policy analysis, and provide direction for those involved.
- The Program of Studies, which includes CALM 20, was approved by the Minister of Education or Learning, and was incorporated into the policies and education plans.
- CALM 20 was riddled with concerns and problems; its review was long overdue.
- Communication about the CALM review was limited.

For the second issue, the following points were summarized:

- Decision makers viewed students as consumers, not stakeholders; other participants felt students were stakeholders.
- Student voice and involvement were most valued at the classroom level.
- Most students wanted to be involved in curriculum and policy reform processes and decision-making but were skeptical of the process and value of their involvement.
- Other stakeholders were identified as potential representatives of students and their views.

In the text which follows, details of the responses from the various participants are provided for each of the issues and conclusions.

First Issue: The Processes of Program and Policy Analysis and Reform

Of all the participants, the decision makers were the only ones who could comment on the review and reform processes for CALM 20 and its policy. Although students at the outset of this study were not aware that CALM was being reviewed, they originally thought that CALM was developed by the teachers, that policies were developed by Alberta Education and the government, and that the Minister of Education had final say about both. Teachers, parents, and health professionals were aware that CALM was under review and revision and expected that Alberta Education would do the bulk of the work in reforming it and its related policy if needed. Teachers felt caught in the middle of the reform debate because CALM was a core curriculum in the Program of Studies, and their responsibility was to teach it regardless of their opinions. Health professionals, however, questioned whether CALM was the right or appropriate venue for high school youth. Parents had no comments about the processes. All participants, however, felt that the CALM review was needed and long overdue. The following two sections provides more details about the processes in place for program and policy analysis and reform, primarily through acts, regulations, and policies, and through the understandings of some of the participants about these processes.

The Acts, Regulations, and Policies

Decision makers made it clear that there were set processes in place for curriculum and policy reviews. With reference to CALM specifically, several decision makers from Alberta Education gave a historical as well as a current perspective of CALM and the experiences with it. For various reasons identified in the next chapter, CALM 20 had become an issue for students, parents, teachers, administrators, and Alberta Education. The policy which made CALM 20 a mandatory requirement for graduation also came up for scrutiny. The decision makers who spoke of CALM's development in the mid 1980s expressed excitement about the activities, consultations, resource development, and teacher in-services developed for what one decision maker called a "Cadillac" life skills course for high schools:

> So I think CALM got off to rather a good start in that there was strong community support for it being developed. Certainly, it was the Cadillac of Cadillacs in terms of curriculum development: more money—I don't know about more, but as much money and more money than had been put into most course development, and I'm talking now English and math and science. We don't get the same kind of plush budgets that CALM had. It was a Cadillac model: lots of consultation; lots of meetings; lots of teachers and business and industry involved at the table; many focus groups and many committees; many, many people involved in advisory structures at various levels. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

Just as there were processes in place for program and policy reviews, the decision makers implied that there were set roles and responsibilities of the Minister and other politicians, Alberta Education bureaucrats, school administrators, teachers, and students. First of all, there are set processes to ensure that education curriculum and policy development and implementation are monitored and that direction is provided at the appropriate level to individuals such as teachers and students. This happens as a result of the acts and regulations in place:

> There is a Government Accountability Act which was passed several years ago that requires every ministry of government and its reporting entities to prepare each year a three-year plan and to submit that to the legislature to make that available to the public. As well, that plan requires that there be performance measures in the plan; and further, that we report annually on our performance measures to demonstrate progress toward the goals and results that we have outlined in that plan. It also means in that act that the reporting entities are covered as well, which means that school jurisdictions are included in that planning and reporting accountability cycle. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

> Further, we also coordinate the regulatory review and policy review for the department. The review of regulations and policies is an activity that was initiated back in 1995. There is a chair of the Regulatory Reform Committee, an MLA, and we do coordinate the review of policies and regulations within the Department, which includes, of course, consultation with stakeholders and external groups that are affected by those regulations and policies. . . . It does require a discussion paper to be done. It does require the circulation of the discussion paper with stakeholder and affected groups. It requires the development, then, of a proposed draft of revised regulations or policies, further consultation, a standing Stakeholder Advisory Council that always meets to review the revised policies and provide advice regarding those. And then finally it has to be, of course, reviewed several points along the line by Executive Committee of the Department, the Minister reviews it, and [the MLA's] task force also reviews, and they must issue a compliance certificate before a regulations then is finally approved for change. So there's quite a process that's associated with that. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

> And basically you cannot adjust the Program of Studies approved by the Minister under Section 25 of the School Act. Once it's approved, that's what you must offer. You have a lot of leeway in terms of materials, the instructional strategies, etc., but not in terms of the Program of Studies. To have that adjusted, the Minister would have to revise and sign it off again, and a teacher has the legal responsibility to follow that as approved by the Minister. There is no leeway. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

In addition to the acts and regulations, it was pointed out that *The Government of Alberta Three-Year Plan for Education: 1998 to 2001* (Alberta Education, 1998e), completed and reviewed each year, provides satisfaction survey results and the focus for Alberta Education's (now Alberta Learning's), initiatives. These plans have essentially included and replaced the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985).

Understandings of Participants

Not all participants could or cared to comment on the processes involved in curriculum and policy reviews and reforms. Students and health professionals offered some additional comments about the processes as they related specifically to CALM and its policy.

Students had different opinions about who was responsible for the development and reform of curriculum and policy. The majority of high school students and alumni believed that teachers develop the curriculum, some of whom would be retired teachers and others who would still be teaching. Some of the high school students felt that "everyone" (meaning students, as well as teachers, parents, and others) has a good say in or influence on curriculum. A few alumni believed that Alberta Education develops the curriculum but that the government, specifically the Minister, has the final say. All students, high school and alumni, believed that policy is developed higher up at the bureaucratic level within Alberta Education. Some high school students felt that corporations and "employers" could influence policies through government. This comment was not followed up through the discussions.

The public health nurses were aware of the CALM review through a representative of public health who sits on a review committee. The nurses felt that CALM may not be the right venue for youth, particularly in outreach settings where kids and teachers think that CALM is irrelevant compared with the life experiences of most youth. The public health nurses felt strongly that CALM needed to be reviewed and that students in high school and graduates needed to be part of the review process.

Second Issue: Who Are the Stakeholders?

The participants identified three areas of discussion about students and stakeholders, and their involvement. These three areas concern students, their involvement and whether or not they are stakeholders, and others as stakeholders. In addition to the set processes and directions laid out for everyone within Alberta Education and at the school level, personal beliefs also influenced how students and others were perceived and involved in curriculum and policy review and reform. Just as "people's interpretation of curriculum and program development varies quite a bit" (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998), so, too, do the understandings of the participants about who should or should not be involved in education decision-making processes and about where students fit into the equation of education reform. One bureaucrat stated

> if we have the right processes in place to develop the curriculum; if we have the right people involved, the right input into it, the resultant product, the learning outcomes that we expect students to obtain, will be valuable and realistic and sort of meet societal expectations. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

Student Involvement

Study participants differed in their opinions about whether or not students should be involved in curriculum and policy review and reform processes, and how they should be involved. Although all participants agreed that students should be involved, decision makers felt that students should only be involved at the local school level, where they can have input into the curriculum delivery strategies and outcomes achievement. This raises several key issues. Student involvement was important to decision makers, but with specific conditions and only in specific circumstances. For example, students would be better at evaluating curriculum implementation and delivery in the classroom with their teachers than they would be at talking about the content. Decision makers felt that the teachers could, in turn, gather student views related to strategies and methodologies to achieve learner-expected outcomes since these outcomes are significant in the Program of Studies. More specific to students decision makers said that they could talk about what motivates them in the classroom:

> Students have the most impact on motivation, so if a curriculum is viewed as exciting and valuable by adolescents, I think that's where they give us the greatest guidance. I think when we're looking at maybe developmental appropriateness and such needs for the future, maybe we look to other stakeholder groups to do that. (Alberta Education, former decision maker, 1998)

The majority of decision makers also said that students should not be involved in curriculum or policy development at the provincial level for several reasons, including:

1. There is no point in having students involved unless they have been through the system.

2. Alberta Education is too remote for students and deals with issues that are more esoteric.

3. Students see their personal lives but do not see a direct correlation with careers and relationship building.

4. "At the policy level, yes, I think they're heard; but I think the bigger impact for them is at the classroom level" (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998).

5. "Student involvement is important, but, practically, it would be impossible to canvass 50,000 Grade 12 students about the Program of Studies" (political decision maker, 1998).

Student involvement was considered more indirect at the provincial level through having their calls and letters responded to or having students involved in some forums and committees, and, of course, through their teachers. Even on committees, it was felt that the importance or significance of the students' contributions was dependent on their background knowledge and experience for topic areas, "and sometimes their opinion just isn't relevant" (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998). Only one bureaucrat stated that students should be involved at the provincial level as well as at the local level, particularly related to the CALM curriculum and related policies.

For CALM specifically, many decision makers felt it was an exception to the rule—CALM is a course students should be involved in developing. They said that students should have input into the content of CALM to make it more relevant for them. The life skills content made it unique and offered a potential for student involvement. However, if students were at the table with others discussing the content and other aspects of CALM, some decision makers spelled out that additional conditions should apply.

> Student involvement has to be formalized just as any other feedback or involvement is, so they should be at the table with other people that are making curriculum decisions. Again, I think that the diversity of students has to be appreciated, so who goes to the table? Maybe it's the most articulate ones that are selected, the brightest, and not the IOP kids, for sure. So I think somehow, especially with CALM, because there aren't the streams that there are, say, in the sciences, in the math, that the diversity of students has to be considered and the diversity of their feedback. But I definitely think they should be involved at the table to articulate what their concerns are. (Alberta Education, former decision maker, 1998)

This same former bureaucrat also believed that if students were to have any say or vote or to be involved in the decision-making process, they must have *all* the information in order to make appropriate decisions and justify them:

> It's not just, "What would you like in school?" but it's, "Business is saying and your parents are saying, and based on that, what would you like in school?" So, I think they should be involved in the decision-making process, and they should have access to all of the information.

Some decision makers generally felt that students could and should be involved in decision making for curriculum and policy. Some of their understandings were as follows:

1. Input from students should be considered because it is often different from adults.
2. Students can help initiate program reviews and development like they did with CALM.

> And one of the most important questions that kids ask the Minister of Education is, "Why do we have to take this stuff?" and that's a pretty good question. And if you can't answer it, then you'd better either figure out what the answer is, or you ought to change the curriculum. CALM is one example where kids said often "Why do we have to take this?" and that's what precipitated the review of the CALM curriculum. (political decision maker, 1998)

3. Students could be involved through various means—at forums, through teachers, through providing input on draft curricula on the web site or through surveys, through school councils, through field testing materials, through curriculum evaluation at the classroom level, and through committees such as the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC).
4. Students should be encouraged to challenge the system as needed. For example, the graduation requirements, which are heavily influenced by postsecondary institutions, is an area which students should challenge:

> Whether those requirements are valid or not, I think, is something that students ought to challenge from time to time. Certainly, I challenge them. There's a great deal of autonomy within postsecondary institutions that sometimes compels students to take courses that they wouldn't ordinarily take and perhaps wouldn't ever require. (political decision maker, 1998)

5. The voice of students should be encouraged through their expression of concerns: "We often underestimate the value of those opinions, because students themselves will have very strong ideas that they're prepared to express candidly if given the opportunity, and I think that's a good thing" (political decision maker, 1998).

Decision makers believed that the majority of high school students wanted to have a greater role and more opportunities to provide input into curriculum and policy reform processes. Some decision makers felt that students should have more involvement, particularly with CALM, but "as long as they don't get the feeling that they have a right to make the decisions. That is a fine line to walk" (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998). It was also believed that students feel that they have no role or a minimal role in education reform processes, because students' contributions are not well understood, even by students themselves. Their roles have not been made explicit by anyone. In fact, students felt that they were not being heard or respected, and many believed that what they have said to teachers has made no difference, even concerning CALM. They suggested some students (10%) may not care to participate or were content with the status quo. There are also those students who think school is a joke and that if they could, they would choose an alternative education system or not go to school at all. This latter group may or may not care to participate. Decision makers thought it would be difficult to say whether those students who dropped out of school would have much to say that would be meaningful about how curriculum was put together.

Did students believe that they should be involved with government, teachers, and others in education curriculum and policy development and reform processes? Why or why not? There were mixed opinions from high school students and alumni about student involvement in curriculum and policy decision-making processes. Three focus groups from urban, rural, and outreach high schools and one alumni group felt that it was important for students to be involved in discussions and decisions. Most students and alumni thought that it was important for students to be involved in making choices about what they were learning because students are the ones who have to learn the materials. Students and alumni said they should try to contribute what they can because their lives will be affected. This same mix of students also felt that others (government, teachers, and others at the table) needed to know from students how they learned best and what content was repetitive or redundant. "We're the ones that go through it! Who else is going to be a stakeholder?" (rural high school student, 1999).

Another group of high school students and alumni were skeptical about the process of being involved. The high school students felt that even if they were involved, their input would go nowhere. These students did not have much faith in seeing changes in the curriculum because of their input. Some students did not trust the system enough to think that they were even being heard, particularly the outreach students. Students who do not fit the traditional mold would not be included or involved: "Adults don't listen to kids because they think we're too young and we don't know anything, and they know it all" (outreach high school student, 1999). However, a few students felt that they were being listened to, but that the wrong things were being heard and passed on. Some of the alumni students also felt that government would stop students from coming forward to become involved in committees or voicing their concerns. Students are not taxpayers, and "if they're not tax payers, they're not voters" (urban high school student, 1999). Some students have sent letters to their MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) and

Ministers and have never had a response. They viewed this as the prerogative of the power structure. In fact, the students felt that even if they approached their teachers about concerns, their teachers would not have much to say about curriculum or policy either.

> They make all the decisions from way above, and then from talking to teachers, it seems like the teachers don't even have a terrible amount of say to people on the front line, and so between not really wanting our opinion and not really taking into account what the teachers have to say, they're making abstract decisions from above, and they're not really looking at what is actually going on. (urban high school student, 1999)

Another group of students, mostly from urban high schools, said that they did not care to be involved in the curriculum and policy reform processes. They felt that their teachers should and could do that for them. These students just wanted to finish school and get out. "I think it's just put out for me. I don't really care that much. I care about school, but I don't think about it as much, what I can change about it. I just go; what's ever there is there" (urban high school student, 1999).

As far as the role that students should or could play in curriculum and policy development and reform in Alberta, most students said that they did not have a role in these processes but would like to have one. All students generally felt that they have had no opportunities for input into courses, delivery, or graduation requirements. "Students' input is nonexistent" (urban high school student, 1999). Unless students as a group make a big deal about something, they are not heard. Students would become involved given the opportunity, and not just a few students should be present to represent all, but all students should have an opportunity through their teachers or annual surveys. Students felt that they do have a role in curriculum and policy development and reform, but they may need to take some initiative in becoming involved and not wait for government to involve them.

Students felt that they could offer suggestions to curriculum and policy development and reform, and a more balanced point of view. They believed that their role might be less in decision making and more as the evaluator of curriculum and its delivery, and of policy related to the graduation requirements. For example, one pointed out that problems with curriculum could be eliminated if students were asked to comment on them in pilots before full implementation. All students said that they should be asked for feedback on all courses. Alumni felt that they should be asked for feedback on the high school Program of Studies and graduation requirements or other policy components which have an impact on students. Given their experiences in having been out of high school and in postsecondary institutions or in the work force, alumni believed they could speak to the relevance of what they learned in high school, as applied to their work or postsecondary experiences.

Teachers, like the decision makers, felt that students were probably most valuable at the local level with the delivery of the courses and the texts and materials, but unlike decision makers, teachers believed that students should also be considered at the provincial level to look at themes and concepts. Some teachers also indicated that representation of the diverse types of students was essential to consider. For example, outreach students have different concerns and issues than students at home without many life challenges do. It was suggested that perhaps evaluation forms could be given to every student in Alberta to fill out, to accommodate student diversity. Other students would talk about their experiences, given the opportunity. It was suggested that surveys were needed to get a broader perspective, because otherwise schools would send the top academic students to represent the student population. Teachers felt that graduates with one or two years' experience in the work force or postsecondary schools would be the best choices as stakeholders.

Parents and health professionals said that students should be involved and probably wanted to be involved, particularly with the CALM review and reform processes. However, they were not certain that students should be involved with policy.

Student as Stakeholder

Students' involvement in curriculum and policy review and reform processes requires that they have a role to play which is acknowledged and accepted. The consideration here is whether or not students are stakeholders in education reform processes. This will also determine the extent of their voice and choice in these processes. The opinions of the study participants varied.

Decision makers made known what conditions existed to limit students' voice and choice. Voice and choice of students were encouraged as long as they went along with planned education initiatives which would validate a direction, provide some options, and so on. Because students are not taxpayers and many do not vote, their voice and choice are still viewed as limited.

> It's interesting in terms of that kids are marginalized partly because of their age and the sense that we don't think we've filled them up yet, and they're not smart enough yet. . . . So we give the voice and choice to people who we think are not just adult voting taxpayers, but are articulate and well connected. (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998)

In addition, although decision makers said that students are valued and that they are a valuable source of information, the value of their input was dependent upon conditions such as the political climate and the perceptions of officials, bureaucrats, and the corporate sector. The attitude of decision makers concerning their value for students' opinions and involvement in making decisions in education also reflected the division in their perceptions concerning students as "stakeholders." In fact, some bureaucrats said that students' opinions are heard and valued, but differently from other stakeholders who are linked primarily through taxpayers' and voters' rights, which students generally are not. There is no immediate or vested interest in students, so they remain a marginalized group in terms of input or consultation. For these reasons, it was not viewed as valuable to have students involved in Alberta policy development and reform. One politician said that student involvement should be valued for the input, whether or not they have a vested interest. At age 18 students will vote, their first tie to societal values. Their choices after high school are made because they are driven by different goals based on curriculum and policies as well as other experiences. In fact, decision makers said that they could respect graduates to understand and discuss why they needed to learn certain things in high school.

Some decision makers were committed to the inclusion of students as stakeholders:

> They're not the only stakeholders; they are perhaps the most *important* stakeholders, because I think in educational policy change, every change has to focus on the question of, "How will this improve education for students?" And if you can't answer that question, then you'd better figure out a way of answering it in a positive way; otherwise it's a policy that serves no purpose. (political decision maker, 1998)

Some went so far as to suggest that students be acknowledged as partners who are actively participating or involved:

> Stakeholders in the sense of being a partner, because we talked a lot in the past about child-centered education, and it was child-centered from the point of view of what the adults thought it should be, I think. And I think maybe we need to look at it, . . . if the student is going to be a partner in education, that he's got to be treated as a partner and not as a person who is on the outside and is asked to contribute from time to time. . . . I think the school councils probably have the potential to do that [have students as partners]. (former decision maker, 1998)

The majority of stakeholders thought of students as conditional stakeholders. One condition related to the age of consent. However, decision makers also said that students were not equal stakeholders to others who were part of a very large diverse group of stakeholders (including organizations such as the Alberta Teachers' Association, superintendents, teachers, parents, postsecondary institutions, business and industries, community members, and the whole education sector): "It's not that they [students] are ignored, but there are stakeholders and there are *stakeholders*" (Alberta Education decision maker, 1998). In fact, some decision makers felt that students are not stakeholders because they are considered to be consumers or customers, and recipients of goods or products of the education system.

But do students see themselves as stakeholders in education reform? The majority of high school students and alumni said "Yes." One high school group was adamant that they were stakeholders by definition of having some interest or investment in their education now and for the future. "What we do now, what we accomplish now is going to determine what we're going to later and how we're going to do it and who we're going to be" (urban high school student, 1999). Some students even said that they would prefer to be partners in their education at all levels, with teachers and others. "I like the partner idea. That seems much more like work on an equal basis there" (alumnus, 1999). One group of urban high school students said that they were not stakeholders because they had no ownership of their education and did not really care about that. They cared about attending school, taking the courses that they had to take for graduation, and getting it over with. They did not care about what they could or could not change about it. When they graduated, they did not think that they would contribute to any process then either. " I like it how it is now. I think it'd be too complicated if we have a choice, because there's already so much stuff; we're all too busy. If we had to choose how the curriculum's going to be, that's one other thing on our heads" (urban high school student, 1999). This same group, however, said that they should have some input into the CALM review because of the direct relevance of the course to students. The majority of students said that CALM was redundant with junior high school courses, and that CALM as it was, was not relevant to students.

Teachers represented their views from their experiences in urban, rural, and outreach schools. When asked if they considered students to be stakeholders in the education curriculum and policy reform processes, all teachers felt that students are stakeholders for the reason that they all have something to contribute to the process, especially for a course such as CALM. Basically, teachers would like the students' opinions to be considered, but would not want the school to be turned over to them. "So far as them [students] being stakeholders in what they do and part of the development and policy, I'd like to hear their opinions and I'd like to see them considered" (urban high school teacher, 1999). Another teacher said:

> There's value in having them [students] have some real feelings in terms of being stakeholders. And if it means giving some kind of concession so that it becomes on the surface very obvious to them, that, "Yes, we had a say, and yes, this is happening because of what we said." But through the whole process, as I say, we have to keep things in perspective in terms of understanding where teens are coming from in terms of their thinking processes and understanding what we are mandated to do as educators. And I think we should be able to make those decisions based on our professional training, if you will. (rural high school teacher, 1999)

Parents were from urban and rural settings. When asked if they viewed students as stakeholders, some parents spoke on behalf of their children and said that if students were asked directly, they would say that they should be involved as stakeholders. Parents felt that it probably would help to have students involved along with those setting up the curriculum. Both would understand why things were being taught and why students have to learn them. The challenge was seen as getting a good representation of students, particularly because it would be a voluntary gesture.

One parent thought that students were definitely stakeholders:

> I think *stakeholders* really refers to owning something; you have a stake in what is it is that's before you. And I think that the students very definitely have a stake in their education, and therefore I do believe they are stakeholders. (parent, 1998)

Students should be "more involved in the process so that they come to own their education, take more responsibility in it, and take more of a decision-making role in the planning of the future of education as well" (parent, 1998).

When asked specifically about whether or not they considered students as stakeholders in education curriculum development and reform processes, the public health nurses unanimously agreed that students were and should be stakeholders in their education, and particularly with CALM and health review. They gave several reasons for why students are stakeholders:

1. Students, through personal life experiences or through peer education discussions, have identified what health and other issues are important to them. Students can say what they need in the curriculum for now and in the future. For example, a smoking cessation program was to be implemented in the school, and when brought to the students, they said that this was the last thing they needed. Why implement something if it is not going to be accepted?

> Students definitely need to be there because they have the personal experience of their life, so they can tell us what they need to see in the curriculum because "this is how I'm living, this is what I want to know, and this is what I think I might want to know in the future." So I think the students have to be there and teachers have to be there and parents have to be there, if you can get parents to go. . . . I think that a lot of the time they have a lot of government officials or a lot of people in administrative positions that attend those sorts of things, but they don't live the life of the classroom necessarily, and that's where it impacts everybody. (health professional, 1999)

2. Students need to be at the table because adults do not always know or understand what the pressures or stresses are for them. Students' values need to be explored, along with what motivates them.

3. Students can comment on their perceptions of how things are delivered in class; they prefer interactive classes over straight lectures. Peer education has become something that they enjoy, especially for CALM.

Students are not likely to want to go to meetings to discuss the curriculum and policies, including CALM. They are unique in that respect, as stakeholders.

Other Stakeholders

Besides considering students as possible stakeholders in education reform, there were others identified as stakeholders because of who they were and what they could contribute to the specific curriculum and policy review and reform processes. In the previous section, decision makers indicated that there was a large diverse group of stakeholders to consider in the education reform processes. This diverse group did not include students as equal stakeholders.

Students identified that there were a number of other commonly identified stakeholders that the high school students and alumni said should or could best represent them and their needs. Most groups selected teachers as important stakeholders. Not only do teachers have to teach the curriculum, but they also talk with students regularly and generally know students. They saw graduates from high school who have experienced postsecondary education or the work force as having a great deal more to contribute. Some students indicated that their parents should also be involved based on the fact that they were taxpayers. It was felt, however, that parents would bring in their own biases:

> And if you were explaining something to a parent and trying to get them to tell the teacher, by the time it gets to the teacher, this idea you have or this thought you have, it's already been said twice. Do you know what I mean? So I just think that the less complications there can be and the more truthful and maybe untouched view of a student or of a child or of a kid or whatever that has this idea, I think that that's better, because maybe the parent will slip in their own perspectives when they're talking to whoever, and lot of times that's not the way it is. And a lot of times they're not able to see it from their kid's point of view or their kid's eyes or what the kid sees. (alumnus, 1999)

Other than teachers, parents, and graduates, students identified different experts as stakeholders, including individuals from business and health, representatives from school councils and school boards, principals, and Alberta Education. In fact, the high school students and alumni generally felt that other stakeholders would have more voice and perhaps choices than students would have. Students would need the support of the other stakeholders, such as teachers, to have their voices heard. Even if lobbying, students would need the voices of many students and other stakeholder groups to be heard. These students felt they had no voice and very little choice, if any, and that they needed to have a voice and to feel valued, but they also knew that they were faced with some very real challenges. These challenges included (a) government's closed and noncommittal attitude to include or to listen to students, (b) difficulty in getting good student representation on committees or the number of students who are committed to make a difference, (c) rural challenges for students in which there are far fewer choices for learning resources or options than in urban centers, (d) schools that are too dictatorial and less reflective of the 1990s and the future, (e) limitations for students which have been engrained in their upbringing by parents and teachers and others, and (f) students' opportunities or channels for voicing concerns or making choices which are dwindling because teachers do not want to listen any more and tell them instead to talk to their MLAs.

Although teachers also felt that they were stakeholders in curriculum and policy development and reform processes, they believed that others were also stakeholders in education, deciding what curriculum and policies would be. These other stakeholders included government or Alberta Education, parents, teaching assistants, administrators, and other experts. Teachers are stakeholders because of the role they play in teaching the curriculum, sitting on committees for course reviews, sharing experiences and resources with other teachers, sharing challenges such as in outreach or rural schools, obtaining evaluations from students and gathering ideas or suggestions from students and parents, and expressing concerns for curriculum and delivery for such courses as CALM.

Some teachers were not certain that they had input into some course changes but felt that they have had to implement them and have had many challenges in doing so. The Program of Studies has become vague and difficult to interpret. These teachers felt that it was important to have a number of stakeholders working together on the same things as opposed to working in isolation, which is usually what happens, and that students should be part of this process:

> Yes, I think everybody is a stakeholder. I think—a personal point of view—that part of the problem with education in general is that teachers and students, students in particular, are not enough of a stakeholder in the process. I think students have a lot of valuable stuff to contribute to the process of education, and I don't think they really feel that they have a fair opportunity to participate, and I'm not sure the teachers feel that they have a fair opportunity to contribute as well. We're the guys on the front lines delivering to the students. So to me it seems logical that those people should have a significant say in what's going on. A lot of stuff that you hear from kids now is negative stuff about the materials that they're covering, and I think part of the reason for that is because the people that are making the decision are not in touch with what's going on. As humans we hang onto tradition pretty strongly, and that motivates a lot of the things that are done. But our society and our world has changed a whole bunch in a very short period of time. (rural high school teacher, 1999)

Teachers felt that graduates with one or two years' experience in the work force or postsecondary schools would be the best choices as stakeholders in education reform.

With regards to whether or not parents considered themselves as stakeholders, they said generally parents need to be involved in discussions around curriculum and policies to know what is going on in education and in their school. They need to know what courses are being taught and why, what changes are being made, and if their child is having any difficulties. Parents can offer their views about what is being taught and its relevance in today's world. These same parents felt that their views, however, would not be as significant as those of the teachers.

> I don't think that parents should have as big an outlook as the educators because the educators really know what they're doing that way. But it's nice to have another outlook because you may miss out on something; you may look at the one viewpoint that parents may look at. So I think it would be good if parents could have a little bit more of a look at what's in the curriculum. They may, maybe not have the last say, but give more opinions. (rural parent, 1999)

One parent felt that the stakeholders, including students and parents, should be "reflective" individuals, or critical thinkers, and people who are motivated to be involved and seek change, if change is what is required. It should not be the best and the brightest who sit on the committees. Stakeholders should come from a variety of forums:

> Sometimes we look at each other as adversaries in that whole education process, especially in the high school, and teachers aren't always seen as being on the same—the playing field isn't level. And so I think that maybe those invitations would have to come from different areas. (parent, 1999)

When asked whether as public health nurses they considered themselves as stakeholders in the education curriculum and policy reform processes, all of the nurses said that they saw themselves as stakeholders, particularly in the CALM curriculum review and development. They have had experiences with students which they can relate, including survey results from students on such things as healthy sexuality. Nurses also have the expertise to offer in health and health issues that teens confront. They see many of the students outside of school and know their issues.

Summary of the Issues and Related Themes

The issues of program and policy development and reform and who should be involved in these processes and making decisions raises many questions about the consultation process used by government concerning fundamental program and policy decisions which have an impact on society and its citizens. First, concerning the issue of CALM and its policy review and reform processes, the study participants agreed that the CALM review was long overdue. CALM was seen as becoming a problem for many, and its relevance and purpose were being questioned. Although this was recognized by decision makers, they also defended the review, reform and stakeholder involvement processes as outlined in the acts, legislation, and policies for education reform.

The second issue of who the stakeholders are in the education reform process is both political and bureaucratic for the most part. The differences in opinions of the study participants, including government bureaucrats and politicians, students and alumni, teachers, parents, and health professionals, sets the tone for any discussion which follows concerning discourses and practices, alternatives or possibilities, and the micro and macro picture.

Many of those interviewed and in focus groups indicated a need to have students involved in curriculum and policy reform processes, but there were mixed feelings as to whether this should occur at the local school level or the provincial level or both. It was felt that students had opinions, suggestions, and ideas which should be heard and reviewed as much as those of other stakeholders in the education reform processes, including government, teachers, and parents. It was acknowledged that students' voices would only have impact or be heard if they were partnered or associated with other stakeholder groups. These other stakeholder groups also felt that their voices or input were limited. Therefore, there was a realization that the final decisions about curriculum and policies would still be made by government regardless of who the stakeholders were and what they said or provided for consideration in the curriculum and policy decision-making processes. Although many of the stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, and health professionals) wanted to have input, they were not certain how they would be able to provide it without an invitation or a consultative process. Many were skeptical that this would happen, or has happened. Most participants realized that stakeholders who were taxpayers, voters, directly involved in curriculum delivery, or graduates, would have more say with decision makers than high school students would have.

For the CALM review, everyone felt that students should have a greater role to play to make CALM more relevant. Policy was a different matter altogether! However, students felt that they would be in the best position to evaluate how effective the curriculum and policy were in meeting their needs. But they also needed the support of other stakeholders in order to be heard. Teachers, parents, and health professionals indicated that they should all be working closely together with students to decide curriculum and policy expectations for CALM. In short, students' voices needed to be heard and acknowledged. However, the decision makers were the only group to say that students were not stakeholders, and that their role and means of contribution needed to be defined not only at the local school or classroom level, but also at the provincial level.

Ultimately, the decision to revise CALM 20 or terminate it, along with any related policy, lies with the Minister of Learning, as stipulated in the School Act (1988). Legislation guides the revision of curriculum content and learning outcomes. This happens at the Department of Alberta Learning and is part of the Program of Studies, also approved by the Minister of Learning.

Implementation of the curriculum is left to schools and classrooms, where students are felt to have direct input.

The two issues, related categories, and conclusions discussed in this chapter form the initial foundation for the conceptual archeological framework. These issues link directly with the next three constructs which are described in the following four chapters.

CHAPTER 5

THE PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES: THE REALITIES OF PROGRAM AND POLICY ANALYSIS AND WHO IS INVOLVED

> *Oberg considers smaller class sizes in schools.* Pilot program in 10 city schools will let him assess benefits. In Edmonton's poorest schools, parents and principals don't need research to prove the benefits smaller classes will have for their smallest students. (Unland, 1999b, p. A1)

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides data findings from the transcripts containing the understandings of those interviewed individually and in focus groups (decision makers who are bureaucrats and politicians, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals). The "Practices and Discourses" construct, categories and conclusions depicted many detailed past and current practices, actual happenings, and discourses concerning the two issues identified in Chapter 4, specific to the processes for the review and reform of CALM 20 and the policy which makes CALM mandatory for graduation, and for student and other stakeholder involvement in these processes. From the participants' data, there was one main or central conclusion which linked other conclusions to the two issues. This central understanding is about the "value" placed on the processes of program and policy analysis and reform, and on the inclusion of students and others as stakeholders in the curriculum and policy review and reform processes. A number of other conclusions were identified, first for the "Practices":

- Prior to 1990, student involvement in any education review or reform process was rare. Since then student involvement has increased in forums, on committees, doing surveys, and in the classroom.
- Many challenges existed in getting students involved in curriculum or policy reviews.
- Students have not been involved in curriculum or policy reviews or evaluations at the provincial or classroom levels, including the CALM review. If there has been input from students it has been at the school level with teachers and parents.
- Students found CALM a waste of time because it was redundant, irrelevant, and poorly delivered. Students voiced these concerns to teachers and parents, some to MLAs.

For "Discourses" the following conclusions were made:

- Student opinions are valued at the local classroom level, but not valued at the provincial level.
- Students' voice is relevant at the classroom and school council levels, but lost at Alberta Education or government level.
- There is a need to get students to buy into education, and not be a voice at the curriculum and policy reviews.
- The relevancy of CALM was compared to student involvement and feedback; some questioned the connection.
- The CALM review and reform were not made well known, particularly to students.
- Students want to participate in education reform, particularly curriculum such as CALM; students are not asked to participate.
- Students feel that they will not be heard, and their comments will not be valued.
- It is a challenge to get students involved.
- Students do not know that they have a voice, but some do not care.
- Students need to be approached for their opinions; they will not contribute on their own.

To best describe the findings, this chapter has been divided into sections under the major headings of Practices and of Discourses. Under each of these headings are subheadings based on the understandings from the participant data.

Understandings of the Practices

Key categories and topics about the practices in curriculum or CALM and policy reform, and in student and stakeholder involvement, have been derived from the participants' data and the conclusions drawn. These categories and topics became the subheadings in this section, and are "CALM and Acts, Regulations, and Policies," "Student Involvement," and "Involvement of Other Stakeholders."

Acts, Regulations, and Policies

Only two decision makers discussed in some detail the connection between CALM and the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985). This policy is now really a historical document, and its application of CALM as mandatory for graduation is part of this document. However, there are new statements in the *Alberta Graduation Requirements* (Alberta Education, 1993a) which still maintain that CALM is required for graduation:

> The *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy* is a piece of history, and very few people that we work with would know what we were talking about if we made reference to it. There are a number of us who are rather long in the tooth in Alberta Education who certainly know the policy intimately, but does it guide our behavior at this point in time? I would say, not very much, that it's been superseded by statements of basic education and the Three-Year Business Plan of government for education, those kinds of broad directives, the document *People in Prosperity*. There are other foundational, directional kinds of documents that have superseded that policy, and while that policy is not officially rescinded, and probably never will officially be rescinded, the fact of the matter is, it's not probably providing much direction to what we do today. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

The government in 1985 and 1986 made CALM a graduation requirement through its identification as a core curriculum in the *Alberta Secondary Education Policy Statement*. The feelings from Alberta Education and others at the time were that students needed this course for life management, finance, and health skills. It was perceived that if CALM was not made a requirement, students would opt not to take it, which would have forced schools to not offer it or reconsider offering it.

Student Involvement

The Alberta Education decision makers indicated that prior to 1990, students were not involved in discussions concerning curriculum and definitely not policies. There were no students involved in the Program and Curriculum Policies Board from 1976 to 1984. When this board was replaced by the Program Assessment Advisory Committee, students were invited to be part of this committee. Decision makers pointed out that one of the problems is that because there is no structural group or organization of which students are a part, such as the Alberta Teachers' Association, the students must come as individuals and not necessarily as representatives of all students.

One former decision maker recalled that in the late 1980s, students were actually part of the review of the sexuality component of CALM. Students provided feedback on the course content and textbooks. Focus groups and visits to students were both done to obtain student feedback and input. Most decision makers, however, did not recall that students were really involved until 1990 when the then Minister of Education, held a forum to review the *Alberta Secondary Education Policy* to discuss its implementation, including the graduation requirements and the career transition program. At this 1990 policy forum, of the 170 participants, nine were students. According to decision makers who were present at the forum, students' votes were treated equally with those of others.

Since then, decision makers said that there has certainly been more student involvement, although their input has always been more indirect through their teachers. Some of that has changed, particularly with the most recent CALM review. CALM is considered unique by decision makers in that students' input is considered relevant for content and delivery. So many value-type issues in CALM need to be addressed somewhere, but this has been the difficulty with defining softer curricular objectives and topics that are difficult to measure and quantify. One of the political decision makers indicated that students have asked why they had to take CALM and why it was mandatory for graduation. This decision maker said that the students' questions precipitated the review of CALM. The conflict was that having to take CALM or fitting it into a very tight timetable reduced the students' flexibility with other courses which they would have to take, particularly to satisfy university or postsecondary entrance requirements. Without a measuring stick for CALM, its value was far less than that of the sciences and the mathematics courses with which CALM had to compete in scheduling. Some of the decision makers felt that because of this lack of a measuring stick and the competition with the sciences and mathematics, really, the MLAs and the business interests had forced the review of the CALM curriculum. They felt that students' concerns which had been voiced for years were not influential enough to instigate the CALM review, not even through the Standing Policy Committee for Education and Training.

One decision maker pointed out that in June of 1998, students were part of a team which made a presentation on CALM to the Standing Policy Committee on Education and Training. This was an anomaly to the Standing Policy Committee's mandate because normally the team presenting has to be a recognized organization or group. However, the MLAs on the Standing Policy Committee wanted to hear from the team and the students. The personal stories from the students were enlightening. The outcome was that the Standing Policy Committee recommended that the presentation go forward to the Minister as an information item only, and not as an instrumental presentation for a decision about the CALM review in the overall curriculum and policy reform process.

In addition to the Standing Policy Committee presentation, decision makers indicated that students had been involved in a preliminary review by Alberta Education. Student participation had been obtained through surveys sent to randomly selected schools. The overall response rate to the survey was 55%. Other student input was obtained through teachers and through some focus groups with three or four students involved. It was pointed out that these latter students said very little and, in fact, appeared intimidated to say anything because of the adults present.

Decision makers also said that this recent involvement of students was very different than in 1991 when the CALM curriculum was first revised. Although teachers submitted survey results on CALM from their students, and students had also been involved in discussions about CALM through symposia with parents and through their involvement on the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC has three student members), decision makers admitted that the numbers of students involved in all three processes would not in any way be representative of the student population.

However, decision makers were quick to point out that students had also been involved in other curriculum reviews such as the Career Transitions program, or CTS and have been considered instrumental in influencing the policy on CTS. Questionnaires had been sent out to 16 schools for student response. The response rate was 100%.

Decision makers noted that unfortunately there was no formalized process for students to be directly involved in discussions of curriculum and policy. They said that the closest medium was PAAC, which reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education. It was identified that this committee currently has three student members—one from high school, one from university, and one from the technology area. These students have the opportunity to review curriculum and relevant policies. However, decision makers commented that this student representation is highly academic and not reflective of student populations or any student groups. Even with three students participating, one decision maker indicated that "sometimes their opinions just aren't relevant." Students are not part of the Department of Education Regulatory Review Committee, which reviews various policies and regulations for education and schools.

In the Edmonton Public School district, there is an Advisory Committee to the Superintendent. This type of committee may or may not exist for all school districts, but it does have student representation from the Edmonton school district. Students have provided advice on issues such as smoking, which has made some difference in what decisions are made by the board.

The alumni, looking back on their high school experiences, indicated very clearly that they had never had much, if any, input into the curriculum or policies. There were no choices with core curriculum, but there was some with assignments. None of the students had evaluated courses while in high school, during, or at the end. The alumni felt that they had always been told what to do, with no input into courses, delivery approaches, or graduation requirements.

The majority of high school students said that their experience with CALM was a waste of time. The course was not relevant or meaningful, and the delivery made it worse. But they had never been asked for their opinions generally, nor did they know of others who had input. Only one high school student knew of another student who had been involved in a public education policy review with two other students, some school trustees, a few teachers, two principals, and some community members. They looked at the goals and the mission statement, and at how to accomplish the goals. However, this involvement had nothing to do with CALM specifically.

Teachers indicated clearly that students have not had input into curriculum or policies. However, the teachers from the outreach school said that they were able to take the CALM curriculum and make it more real and relevant for the outreach students, who have a wide range of life experiences. The students could make CALM relevant for themselves: "We took the CALM curriculum and made it real, as real as we could, and not only on paper and in the actual instruction, but through those relationships." In alternative schooling the students' involvement is equal to that of the teachers.

Parents generally had less to say about the actual practices and discourses concerning student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform. Parents said that they were not aware that their children had been involved in any curriculum or policy reviews, especially at the provincial level. If anything, teachers would have represented students in discussions. However, at the local school level, parents said that students had been involved in making decisions for policies for such things as discipline and smoking:

> I know when we were reviewing that discipline thing, they had parents, teachers, and students; and they [students] were the ones that drew it up. They all [all groups in previous sentence] brought their information, and got it together and agreed on something. But it was a joint thing. (rural parent, 1999)

Health professionals were concerned that student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform had not happened. However, they felt that students were not likely to have gone to committee meetings. Therefore, when students are approached at their level, they would not voice their ideas or concerns for curriculum or policy development or reform. This was definitely true for inner-city youth:

> I think from my perspective—and I do come from an inner-city perspective where you have a person that knows how to work the system like the back of their hand, but at the same time [as] they know how to work it, it's a very threatening and it's a very overwhelming system to use; it's not very user friendly. They don't feel like they're heard, and I think it needs to be done in a forum that's very comfortable to the public's needs, which means it might be informal. It might be little focus groups and talking circles and all that kind of stuff. Filling out questionnaires, that type of stuff, is very threatening and very formal for certain people to fill out, and you will not find out what your clients need. If you hold a public meeting, in a lot of areas of the city you're not going to get anybody to show up, and you're not going to hear what the clients really need. . . . There has to be all sorts of forums and all sorts of information exchanges so that you meet everybody in your community. (health professional, 1999)

Health professionals believed that the type of teen that would go to meetings would not represent the student population as a whole. They indicated that peer educators have provided some good feedback because they are able to connect better with their peers in classes:

> I think the biggest impact and input comes through peer education. It's really wonderful to watch that, because they have a good sense of how professionals and others can come up with activities and lesson plans and that, and they'll tell you, "We think this'll work," or they won't buy that. And they listen to their own. I would prefer to have the role of the health professional supporting peer educators in the school, because I think they can deliver the message better than I can. (health professional, 1999)

The alternate schools offered students more involvement with teachers to design the CALM curriculum to meet their needs and make it more relevant. The Life by Design course in two schools was designed by students with their teachers. Students had more freedom around the design of classes and of work experiences, but they also had direction from their teachers as needed.

Involvement of Other Stakeholders

One decision maker indicated that although students are represented on School District Advisory Committees, these committees have been more sensitive to the reactions of the administrators and teachers:

> I think as long as teachers are sensitive to the reactions of their students—at staff meetings we would try to pull that out, and it got to the point where teachers were saying, "In some cases our students have a hard time with this topic or don't feel this is necessary." (1998)

When decision makers were asked what other stakeholders they had utilized to represent students, they mentioned different individuals and groups. Graduates have certainly been called on by one decision maker in discussions to answer "How could you have been better prepared for what was asked of you in the postsecondary training that you took, or how could you have been better prepared for directly entering the workforce?" Also, when graduates indicate that CALM was a waste of time, they need to be listened to. Ultimately, graduates are the ones who are benefiting or paying the price for the education system not doing its job:

> Students, again, the older they get, the more meaningful their input. But they are certainly a crucial input, a stakeholder, because ultimately they're the ones who are receiving the benefits or will pay the price for us not doing a proper job. So to what extent they should be involved is another question. I would have to do some careful thinking about that, and certainly we are trying to address that in this district. (decision maker, Edmonton Public Schools, 1998)

Other stakeholders have also been involved. Teachers and administrators have been asked to respond to curriculum and school changes. Principals have been brutally honest about what their teachers, parents, and even students are saying. Parents, too, have provided input, but as one decision maker said, the parents listen to their kids' complaints, and "mostly the parents think that [CALM is a waste of time] because they don't know what the program is." Parents have also provided input into the curriculum and policy through the school councils. Parents are better able to express their concerns to the politicians than the school boards are. Specifically related to CALM, other community groups provided input for students, including the business sector, health professionals, community services and organizations, researchers on student needs and aptitudes, guidance counselors, career specialists, and others. "I can't think of hardly anybody that doesn't have a part to play in this" (decision maker, politician, 1998). In fact, decision makers felt that there were others who should have been involved or had a voice in curriculum and policy reform but were not invited or encouraged to become involved.

Teachers indicated that they have been involved in discussions about CALM, along with parents, but decisions are still made at the top within Alberta Education.

Understandings of the Discourses

Several topics and categories describe the discourses regarding processes in the CALM review and reform, and student and stakeholder involvement in these processes. These categories and topics are contained in the subsections: "Student Voice and Choice: Link With Curriculum Relevancy and Ownership," "Value of Student Involvement," and "Student Buy-In."

Student Voice and Choice: Link With Curriculum Relevancy and Ownership

When asked how student involvement in curriculum and policy decision making impacts on the purpose, relevancy, and successful achievement of outcomes in education, about half of the decision makers felt that there was a direct connection. They said that if policy or curriculum is relevant in one's life, then there will be more respect for the said curriculum or policy:

> The possibility of carrying out the reform is very closely linked to student involvement. If the reform or the initiative has no meaning to them, if they've had no involvement in it, it sounds like it's absolutely ridiculous to them, they are not going to respect the policy or conform to whatever the program is going to be. And certainly in curriculum, what they're even going to learn in areas like CALM and health is going to be highly dependent, I would say, on whether or not they feel that curriculum is relevant to them. (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

One decision maker referenced research which has shown that with student involvement in what and how they are learning, the relevancy increases. Another decision maker also pointed out that it is possible that student participation in regulations and policy reviews impacts on the ownership of those regulations and policies. The fact that legislation states that students are to be part of the school council may or may not make them feel a higher level of ownership with regard to legislation. Possibly 10% of students feel satisfied with having this or other channels open to them; most do not care. In other words, the opportunity may be there for students to be involved, but they may choose not to participate:

> I don't think we were getting feedback from students that were saying, "No, don't include us." The fact that it's written into legislation that they have a seat on the school councils, does that make them feel a higher level of ownership with respect to legislation? Maybe, maybe not. The kind of things they just look at the legislation as, well, it's there. Do they look at school councils as being more relevant to them because they have a seat on it? Probably, yes. How many students care? You're probably going to have the kinds of kids that are really interested in the notions of governance and their participation in decision making; you probably don't get a heck of a lot, but you'll get some; let's say maybe ten percent of the student population on average at that age is interested and feel it's important, and it at least gives them a voice. So yes, I think in that case you'll probably get a chunk of students that feel that even if they don't participate, they feel satisfied that at least the opportunity is there and there is a channel voice that's open to them. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

Another decision maker suggested that because students had these channels open to school councils, principals, and school boards, there was not much use in the students' coming to Alberta Education with concerns about curriculum or policies. Students' input is still more indirect at the provincial level and more linked with curriculum and policy at the local school level. In addition, if students had more to say on the delivery of courses, they would say that the curriculum is more relevant to them. At the local school level students have more opportunity for input and may feel more ownership if they have the opportunity to offer their contributions. The Program of Studies is student focused, and students with the competencies also have the opportunity to challenge courses because of the Challenge Policy. Still, another decision maker felt that a partnership was needed between students, teachers, parents, and community to ensure that the students' efforts in making curriculum relevant would work:

> We [Alberta Education] need to support the work of schools, so it's all of us together; not put their job over there and my nice little silo over here, and I just pretend I don't see what's happening. We have to see how much that system works together. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

There were also those decision makers who were not so committed to or supportive of the fact that with student involvement there was also a direct connection to better education relevancy or purpose. Some decision makers felt that increased student input into curriculum or policies would not necessarily lead to increased value or purpose. This premise was more intuitive than proven because of the limited numbers of students who have had input into curriculum and policy; and secondly, students really do not know what they need until after they graduate. They are better at evaluating and criticizing curriculum than developing it. In fact, said one decision maker, experience suggests that with greater student involvement, we would *not* have a more flexible or relevant curriculum:

> Do we really know how that purpose and relevancy are linked with student participation? No, I don't think we really know that, because I don't think we've involved them extensively enough to really know what the outcomes would be, and I can only guess and say I'm not convinced that greater involvement of the student would lead to increased relevancy of the curriculum or increased flexibility of curriculum and so on. I think that's an incorrect perception that some people hold. My experience, limited as it is, doesn't suggest to me that we would have a more flexible or relevant curriculum result from greater involvement of students. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

Another decision maker indicated that student involvement would not necessarily lead to changes in curriculum or policy. Several also pointed out that CALM might be the exception because if this course had student involvement, it probably would become more relevant and meaningful. But then the issue would be, "Should CALM remain mandatory within the policy?"

The alumni said that students should not have to learn the hard way after they graduate. Because students are a captive audience every day, they learn to understand what is relevant and what has purpose. They also learn to become critical about which course they end up having to take after they complete them, and particularly after they graduate, which might be too late:

> There's not enough teaching; they're going out learning the hard way, because that's just the way it has to happen, rather than putting people in front of them that can give them some idea as to what the real world is like, what's out there, what's going to get you ahead and what's not going to get you ahead. There's so much better ways to learn than finding out through negative consequences, I guess. And school can do that; I think school can really do that. And I don't think a lot of people think that. (alumnus, 1998)

> I think you don't really think about it. Again, you just feel like, I'm here because I have to take the course to graduate. But now you realize, what was the point of that course? What was I really supposed to be doing in that course? How much did I learn, and where am I going to use the stuff that I learned?—or if I learned it. You think about it later, but I don't think you think about it then. (alumnus, 1998)

> I remember sitting there thinking, This is Career and Life Management? What are you teaching me? You're not teaching me anything I don't already know. You're not making this fun. It just wasn't what I needed it to be, and it was disappointing, really, and I don't think that's necessary. Yes, I just think there's so much potential there that's being lost. I remember thinking back then, This is ridiculous! . . . Let's talk about something real. Let's have a debate. Let's do something to get it moving here. And it just never happened. (alumnus, 1999)

> I think it also has to do with how it's done, that I'm not necessarily sure that the person standing in front of me teaching me this stuff is the best person to be teaching me this stuff. (alumnus, 1999)

Some students pointed out that they had complained to their teachers about CALM and were told that they had no choice but to take it in order to graduate. The students felt that their comments made no difference because nothing changed either in class or with the course itself. The students were also aware that the teachers had no choice in teaching the curriculum either. In fact, the high school students said that their teachers also agreed that CALM was a waste of time, but because CALM was a requirement for graduation, everyone had to grin and bear it:

> A lot of my friends are taking CALM right now, and the teachers are even open with the class, saying, "You know what? This course is a waste of time. You don't really need it; you all know this already. But we have to do it because you have to have it to graduate. " So even the teachers are like, "Yes, we have to do this, so just smile through it." (outreach student, 1999).

Many of the high school students said that their parents were also frustrated with CALM and really did not know where to go with their concerns. Some parents had gone to the school councils because they were displeased with the inadequacy of CALM in preparing students for the future or with the fact that CALM was mandatory and yet not preparing students for university in any way. Student choices for courses were decreasing because of the school policies saying what is mandatory and, on the other side, the universities stating what they require for entrance. Students were uncertain whether or not there had been any resolution of their parents' concerns.

Most teachers saw students as being more involved in the classrooms by providing input into the delivery. Students involved in the delivery approach would make courses more relevant and interesting for them. The rural teachers had a different perspective: They felt that the curriculum expectations were too narrow in many cases. Rural youth do not have access to "neat" and varied resources or options. Teachers, too, are limited. The rural teachers also felt that changes in curriculum were not fast enough to accommodate the many changes in society and cyberspace technology. The processes involved in courses such as CALM are important for youth to learn, as well as the content:

> In the context of the class, there's usually real issues that they're facing. There isn't necessarily a curriculum item that's there. For example, FOIPP [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act] has already come in. The curriculum is too slow in the change, in coming in. Those kids don't realize when they sign up for a list at the CD shop, at their favorite music store, that their name just got sold to how many companies, that their personal information just went across the planet, because it's cyberspace. It's

> not just one company. There's different little things, I guess, in curriculum. I don't think it moves fast enough; I don't think we have enough input. (rural teacher, 1999)

Most of the teachers were aware of the students' dislike for CALM through discussions and evaluations. Teachers said that students had said they wanted the course to be flexible and relevant and allow them to make the connection to relevance themselves, have purpose, provide effective and meaningful communication, be less rushed, be interactive, and be real. Some students have also told teachers that they want to be involved in the decision making concerning CALM and its content and, more so, concerning why CALM is mandatory. Other students have said that they do not want to be involved. Generally, teachers agreed that students participate more in something they like and in which they have an interest. However, getting good representation from students to speak up about all their concerns to groups or committees, other than teachers, has been the challenge. But teachers have also said that students need to understand the process and how decisions are made. They may not always get their way, but they will have the experience of trying.

> And they need to know that they're being heard, and we need to do something to let them know that they're being heard. Whether or not it's the whole meal deal is not an issue. But you still have to go through the hoops of convincing them, or at least telling them, that there is a process here: "You went through the process, you had your input, the decision was made." (rural teacher, 1999)

With regards to policy, only one teacher commented that she really did not know if there was a place for students in policy development. This teacher also said that teachers were also not familiar with policy and how it is developed.

Parents felt that students were generally too quiet or did not feel comfortable voicing their concerns. Students do not know that they have a voice, or they may not care because they are too young and have not yet thought about those kinds of things. Parents felt that oftentimes it is the highly academic achievers who are selected to represent all students on committees. A low achiever in school may not have the opportunity but would probably value the experience to participate. And even with CALM, they may have voiced their concerns to parents and teachers, but that is as far as it has gone.

Health professionals felt that the outcomes for students would be better if they were approached for their opinions on how things would work for them, rather than taking issues to them as they are. Sometimes adults place too much emphasis on what is needed to be taught rather than on how it should be taught. Relevance fits with students' values, needs, and maturity level. For inner-city kids, relevancy is directly related to their ideas and the challenges they face every day. The curriculum has to be practical in providing life skills for kids to cope or survive each day and be prepared for the future. Students are living with pressures and stresses and need education programs to help them communicate and deal with issues. In fact, said one health professional, students in the inner city are not affected by or concerned about education policies or curricula development. There is no pressure on them to succeed, but they see it as a good thing. Students in the alternate schools have more freedom to express themselves to teachers, the principal, or health professionals. They share their issues and talk about what is important to them, including that they be heard and supported. Otherwise, outreach students would be too shy or intimidated to speak out.

Specifically with regard to CALM, the health professionals again felt that student involvement in schools or elsewhere had been limited but that students want to be involved. Again, getting good student representation and a great deal of input from students has been challenging, but it can be done through focus groups and peer education surveys. In some of the schools where peer education is in place, students have had more freedom and flexibility in making choices and talking about what needs to be changed in CALM. Most students have indicated to health professionals that they hated CALM, that it was boring and noninteractive:

> Some teachers are getting away from that lecture kind of format. Students seem to love the informal kind of discussion or ways they can be involved more, whether it's them presenting or doing group work or whatever. It seems that that kind of thing is much more favorable with the students, letting them sort of have some freedoms around how the class will go, but at the same time having a teacher there perhaps for guidance. And I'm sure that it varies from one class to another, because I'm sure there's classes that would just do nothing if they had the option to. But lots of schools have different leadership kind of groups. (health professional, 1999)

Value of Student Involvement

Decision makers said that they had been sensitive to students' comments about why their issues had not been valued. Decision makers were aware through committees and advocates that students have become cynical of the review process and their involvement in or input into CALM. Decision makers felt that, had the student involvement at the local level been stronger with teachers, the student experiences with CALM would have also been more positive. But that did not happen; it was shrugged off. Students now are becoming more vocal about their discontent, as voiced through discussions with teachers, parents, and others. There is also now an annual public opinion survey with Grade 12 students, parents, and others to find out their views about the education received by students and the plans for the future. This is part of a 10-year tracking process for students and education changes.

The discourse of decision makers, whether related to curriculum or policy, was focused on the value of student involvement in the development of curriculum and policy rather than in the delivery. They believed that students' involvement is valued at the classroom level more so than at the provincial level. They said that those students who are made to feel a part of a course in the classroom will value it.

Students revealed that the discourse around student involvement was that students have not been asked to participate in evaluating courses in class or for Alberta Education:

> I'm not sure that students are given that kind of credit, that kind of power, to actually say what they think about the courses. It's just, "Guess what? You're in high school. Here you go. It's not up to you; it's up to us." I think there's sort of a power structure that happens there. (alumnus, 1998)

Another alumnus felt that students would probably not offer information without being asked:

> I think the problem is that the questions aren't being asked, because the whole idea of being a high school student, being a teenager is that you're not necessarily going to offer anything unless you're specifically asked about it or unless there's some importance placed on what you think. And I think for lots of students, especially within that age group, being a teenager, there's a lot of devaluing that goes on. You don't necessarily feel like you've got it together to begin with, so it's a hard time to be in as it is, so to be given that little bit of power, I think it would be valuable. We had good ideas then; we've got good ideas now. (alumnus, 1998)

As a general discourse, students stated that they felt they would like to contribute at the end of their courses, at which time they thought that they would have more to contribute as to what helped or what did not, what students really wanted to learn, and what kinds of things they found useless or redundant. They felt that this type of course input and evaluation based on student experiences could help those taking the course in the future. Students were also able to comment on some of the challenges faced by the teachers of CALM: They were not being trained to teach CALM, the course was too rushed because there was not enough time to cover everything in the curriculum, and the course was redundant and became a time waster or filler for both teachers and students. But students believed that CALM also had potential as a course which could offer students many skills for their future and which covered information not dealt with anywhere else:

> I think in a lot of aspects CALM is a really unique course because it's the only one that gets you away from all the knowledge theory. Yes, all the theory, and gets you to deal with the practical stuff, like, if I were placed in a situation tomorrow where I have an income, how am I going to budget it?
>
> I think this course offers really practical things you would never learn otherwise.

> It's important to have CALM to sort of bring all that together. (urban high school students, 1998, 1999)

The one thing about which students were resentful was that CALM was mandatory.

The other point of view from health professionals is that students may have a right to say something about how courses are delivered and what they think is important to learn, but they really are not the ones who should be commenting on what courses they need to take or what the policies state. There are some things that go beyond the input of students:

> We want those kids to be ready. It's a domino [effect]. They have to be ready for whatever—postsecondary, if they choose to go to postsecondary; they have to be ready for the rigors of that. It's just not, "I think I need this." No, you have to be able to apply and get in because they've already said you need this, this, and this. So I think they're very valid asking the questions, asking them how they think it should be shaped and taught and those kinds of things, but I think you're going to have to talk to a lot more people about what courses and what classes and what policy. It goes beyond high school, I think. (health professional, 1999)

Decision makers believed, as revealed in their discourse, that students did not see or understand that others could also represent their collective perspective: "I think it goes back to that balancing act: How many students have given feedback in relation to the other people that are giving feedback? Do you have representative numbers, or how do you grasp that diversity?" (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). Another former decision maker commented that Alberta Education must have an attitude that "everyone has a contribution to make." In fact, it was felt by most decision makers that "we are consulting with a much broader group" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). The combination of technology and attitude to consult more broadly in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s has opened up opportunities to everyone.

Student Buy-In

Decision makers at Alberta Education felt that much of their job involved making access and opportunities in education available to students so that they buy into their education and consequently perform better:

> I think the impact upon students is always a first consideration in terms of policies. I think some of the discussions that we have on everything under the sun, the thought of, is it providing the best possible education for kids? Is it giving them the access that they need? Are we removing as many barriers as we possibly can to students having those opportunities for getting a good education? Yes, I think that's always first and foremost in our minds. We certainly also have keenly in mind as we look at any policies, whether or not we are indeed being equitable—not just that we're providing equal opportunities, but where we recognize that there are difficulties that students might have in accessing or getting access to educational opportunities, are we trying to break down those barriers so that the access is more equitable? Given the fact it may be their geographical location or

> their ethnic origins or their abilities or disabilities, are we trying to make the playing field as level as we possibly can for these kids? Taking full awareness, of course, that you simply don't pour knowledge and skills into a child—there is the give and take aspect of it—but certainly, what can we do to try to make those opportunities as readily accessible as we possibly can? So whether or not we're talking about transportation policies, whether we're talking about funding policies, whether we're talking about policies that affect the provision of services to various groups of kids, how can we try to make sure that our policies will try to best meet the needs of those students? So that's always first and foremost in the stuff that we look at. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

> Now, sometimes students in school may be absolutely convinced that something is unnecessary and silly, and we know from our experience it's extremely important. The idea is to try to cause the student to understand why it's important. And then I think you get very good buy-in from the student body. (decision maker, Edmonton Public Schools, 1998)

Students were, however, pleased to hear that CALM was being reviewed by Alberta Education and the Minister of Education. However, they were disappointed that they had not heard about this review from their teachers, but they were not sure that their teachers even knew about it. Earlier consultations with students and teachers would have told Alberta Education that there had been major problems with CALM for quite some time:

> We've had CALM for how many years, and kids keep saying it isn't useful, but it still hasn't changed at all. Really, what's going to happen differently if we get involved? Because they still have to say that you have to take this course. (urban high school student, 1999)

Students were able to talk about CALM and what was relevant, current, valuable, repetitive, useless, old, or practical. The relevance might be different for outreach students than for others:

> The relevance of the course is reflected in what is relevant for a person to live and survive in the real world, including renting or buying a house, protecting oneself, room mates and problems, racking up phone bills, etc. What can you do? What should you do? What can't you do? Those would be relevant. (outreach student, 1999)

However, parents felt that in order to have buy in, the problems with CALM needed to dealt with. There were several problems identified with CALM, by parents. These included (a) the content of CALM needs to be examined because there is a lot of redundancy from previous years, and (b) problems arise for those students who need science credits and have to fit CALM in because it is required for graduation. So relevancy and timetabling of CALM were problems identified. Parents however said CALM was important because of some of the good information offered, which students otherwise would or could miss out. Examples included budgeting, career counseling, resume writing, and parenting skills. For this reason, parents were pleased that CALM was being reviewed and not eliminated. They felt, however, that Alberta Education had a huge job in getting people involved, including parents.

Surveys by health professionals have been conducted with students to find out what they think or feel and to explore topics such as sexuality education, comprehensive school health, and other CALM issues. The results indicate that students wanted a more interactive course from kindergarten on up and that CALM was not enough to help them develop the skills they need:

> We can put too much value in one course. I'm not so sure we really need CALM as much as we need the components of CALM all through school years so that it's just art of living, and that that needs to be almost part of the information we give parents, information we give youth groups, wherever, so that students have that knowledge, that it's common and available.

The health professionals questioned whether or not CALM was the right venue in high school. If not, then they saw a buy-in as being a long way away.

Chapter Summary: Understandings of Practices and Discourses

The interview and focus group data from decision makers, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals indicated mixed facts and feelings about the actual and proposed student involvement in curriculum, particularly content, and in policies of any kind. Most felt that students had not been involved in curriculum and policy decision-making processes, especially at the provincial level, and even to some extent at the local school or classroom levels. However, decision makers and teachers felt that students have been involved at the school or classroom levels, providing feedback to teachers about the curriculum and delivery approaches. Policies were felt to be out of reach for students. Policies have also changed over the past decade and have been replaced with graduation requirement guidelines and a three-year business plan. This, too, changes how stakeholder involvement will be needed or used in policy decision making at the provincial level.

Students felt that although they have had no input into curriculum, their feedback would be critical to ensure the relevancy of courses such as CALM. Parents and health professionals also felt that student involvement was necessary to ensure that the course would meet their needs and would be more relevant than it has been. There was no doubt that all participants felt that students wanted to be more involved in curriculum and policy decision making or even review discussions. But getting them involved was also seen as a challenge, because students are not inclined to attend committee meetings. There needs to be flexibility in reaching students. The practices and discourses indicate that there is very little desire for decision makers to involve stakeholders, particularly students, in program and policy decisions. The stakeholders and students are given some opportunity for input, but it appears that just as many have said that it is "lip service." The fact that none of the students were aware that CALM 20 was under review, when in fact some were taking it at the time of the interviews and focus groups, made them wonder about the value of their involvement.

CHAPTER 6

DOCUMENTED AND OBSERVED PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES OF CALM, POLICIES, AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

> 'Students behaving with year-round schooling'
> A report comparing Eastwood's first year of year-round schooling with 1997-98 school year shows that:
> - Of the 82 per cent of parents who returned the parent survey, 99 per cent supported year-round model.
> - Suspensions decreased to 43 from 119.
> - In 1997-98, only 40 per cent of Eastwood's students stayed for the whole school year, compared with 60 per cent under year-round schooling. (Unland, 1999c, p. B5)

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter contains highlights from (a) the secondary documents related to education and policy development in Alberta from the 1980s to 1993, and involving stakeholders. Many of the documents are specifically but not exclusively about the Career and Life Management Curriculum, or CALM, and its related policy recommendation in the *Alberta Secondary Education Policy Statement* (Government of Alberta, 1985), the *Alberta Education Graduation Requirements* (Alberta Education, 1993a); and the *Three-Year Plan for Education (1998-2001*; Alberta Education, 1998e); and (b) the current review process of CALM 20 from 1997 to 2000.

All accessible and available documents regarding CALM, related policies and legislation, health or other curriculum reviews, and any forums or events in which students and other stakeholders have been involved were reviewed for this study. Most of these documents were accessible through various libraries and through Alberta Education. Access to primary documents from the 1980s to 2000 proved to be a challenge. Minutes and original discussion notes were not accessible, or perhaps not even available; therefore, secondary documents were the only source of information. The only primary notes and information available were my notes and a few other documents which had been gathered from the start of this study in early 1998.

Conclusions drawn from this data include:

- Extensive amounts of time and effort had been invested in health education from K to 12 over the past 20 years, which meant that the issue of health was important.
- The evolution of CALM and its related policies which occurred over the past 15 years was not without many challenges around controversy, relevancy, and support from various stakeholders.

- There were very few examples or situations over the past 15 years in which stakeholders and students, in particular, had been consulted regarding curriculum and policy, including with CALM.

The background information related to the development and implementation of CALM and the *Alberta Secondary Education Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985) was documented in the 1980s, but again only secondary documents are available. Bosetti (1990) reviewed and chronologically documented all the major documents, events, and dates related to the development and implementation of CALM. Many of the documents in her dissertation were unpublished and therefore unavailable in libraries or through personnel at Alberta Education. My challenge was evident: It was difficult to find documents over the past 20 years which would reveal what the actual discourses and practices were regarding CALM and policy development and the involvement of students and stakeholders. There appeared to be many influencing factors involved in the macro (structural) and micro (interpretative) levels which affected the discourses and practices in the development and reviews of curricula and policies, but no documented evidence for these claims.

The Development of CALM (1977-1997)

From the context of the primary and secondary documents available, and from Bosetti's (1990) dissertation, *Career and Life Management: A Case Study of Curriculum Implementation in Alberta*, the following events and highlights emerged as significant discourses and practices concerning the development and reform of curriculum and policy, some specific to CALM and some concerning student and stakeholder involvement:

1. In 1977 an Interdepartmental Task Force was established with representatives from government departments including Education, Social Services, Community Health, Advanced Education and Manpower, Agriculture, Worker's Health, Safety and Compensation, Recreation and Parks, and Transportation (Alberta Government, 1980). There were no other stakeholders on this task force. The responsibilities of this group were to critically assess "the current health education and health related programs in the educational system, to identify the critical health needs of students, and to make recommendations with regard to education and the health needs of students" (Bosetti, 1990, p. 63).

2. In *The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta* (Alberta Education, 1978), which was adopted by the Alberta Legislature, school health education is embodied in the goal of schooling by which students "develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits which contribute to complete physical, mental and social well-being" (p. 2).

3. The *Curriculum Development Chart, 1979-1980* (Alberta Education, 1979), included an outline of the "Subject-Courses," "Development," and "Notes/Comments." For Secondary Education, health was identified as a subject-course and was given the following Development overview:

> A proposed secondary health program was presented to the Curriculum Policies Board for review. Guidelines for proceeding with its development were given by the board. A contract for identification of objectives for the program has been completed. The report will be before the ad hoc Committee this fall. Presentation for proposed programming to the Curriculum Policies Board is planned for early 1980. (p. 4)

4. In November 1980 the *Report of the Interdepartmental Task Force on Health Education in Schools* was released by the Alberta Government (1980). This report outlined the Terms of Reference of the task force, which included defining health education as it related to programs for Grades 1 to 12 which meet critical health needs of students. The task group also identified 34 critical health needs of school children through a community survey. Existing health education programs in schools were also assessed, and changes to programs were recommended. In addition to the recommendations made to other provincial departments, those specifically targeted to Alberta Education read as follows:

> I. That Alberta Education ensure that a mandatory health education program is provided to all students in grades 1 through 12. This program should address all critical health needs of students identified by the Task Force.
> II. That Alberta Education ensure that the identified critical health needs of Alberta school age children be addressed both through a core health curriculum and through other subject curricula where appropriate.
> III. That Alberta Education provide consultative assistance to Alberta school jurisdictions in the delivery of the school health education programs.
> IV. That Alberta Education identify relevant government and community programs for inclusion as curriculum support resources in the provincial school health curriculum guide. (p. 2)

5. In 1980, at a conference entitled "Curriculum Decision-Making in Alberta III: A Change Curriculum for the Changing World," sponsored and reported by the Alberta Education, Alberta Teachers' Association, and Alberta School Trustees' Association (1980), resolutions regarding curriculum policy making, Curriculum Policy Board roles, along with committee participation were forwarded for voting. Many of these resolutions were carried, except for one which was defeated, "that Alberta Education provide for parental representation on curriculum development committees at the provincial and local levels" (p. 92). No specific resolutions on health education were mentioned at this conference, although the curriculum development chart for 1979-1980 had been circulated (Alberta Education, 1979).

6. In 1982 a report on *Alberta Education Curriculum Committees: An Analysis of Their Structure and Composition* was released by Bevan. This document described the roles and responsibilities of various curriculum and policy decision making under the Curriculum and Student Evaluation Policies Board (CSEPB) under the Minister of Education. The CSEPB was "the primary but not sole source of policy formulation with respect to curriculum" (p. 2). For three branches within Alberta Education, there were 15 Coordinating Committees and 88 ad hoc Committees. Classroom teachers made up over 50% of members on all these committees, along with departmental employees, postsecondary representatives, and subject supervisors. For ad hoc committees, others including parents made up 3% or 20 of 579 members on 88 committees.

7. In 1984 two papers for the Educational Implications of the Future Project of the Secondary Education Review of Alberta Education were released. The first paper, entitled *The Educational Implications of the Future: Policy Options For Guiding the Reformulation of Secondary Education in Alberta* (Alberta Education, 1984a), was completed by Butt (1984a) from the University of Lethbridge. Butt outlined 17 elements of a framework for a preferred future for secondary education in Alberta, one of which highlighted the need for "participatory decision-making" as being "central to each group, community, enterprise, institution, and level of government. Structured hierarchies will give way to networks and ad hocracy will serve as an integrating and nurturing force" (p. 9). He suggested new curriculum elements and topics such as "Lifestyles, Occupations, and Quality of Life: Coping and Creating Your Future" (p. 16). This curriculum element "represents an approach to preparing pupils for fashioning their own lives through jobs, self-employment, coping with life's chores, dealing with institutions, creating self-help networks, activist organizations, and the like" (p. 16). Another curriculum element was identified as "Personal & Interpersonal Health," which

> would be an integrated approach to physical, emotional, psychological health ranging through physical activity, nutrition, basic health, medical knowledge and skills. Knowledge of oneself—needs, interests, aspirations; understanding oneself as an adolescent or young adult, human development & sexuality, interpersonal communication skills, gender issues, and so on. (p. 17)

One clear indication from the examination of future implications was that "secondary education needs major reconstruction" (p. 33). Core curriculum needed to be identified and curriculum content defined. There were also clear policy changes needed to assist with decreasing the schism between policy in education and classroom practice. Policy needed to be less top-down; less focused towards changing documents, policies, and systems rather than helping people change their actions; and less separate from action and implementation.

The second paper also prepared by Butt (1984b) was called *Pioneering the Future: Educational Implications and Policy Directions for Alberta Secondary Schools*. This was a more detailed paper than the first one, with 21 specific policy implications identified. The recommendations from these two reports triggered the Secondary Education Review, which was complex and involved obtaining information and feedback not only through a questionnaire which was distributed to every Alberta household, but also through studies of adolescent needs and attitudes studies, Alberta and Canada forecasts, public Gallup polls, student opinion polls, cross-country changes, and provincial public forums (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 3).

8. Three separate *Review of Secondary Programs* were published: (a) *Alberta's Secondary Education Program: Research Basis* (Alberta Education, 1984a) contained an historical overview and summaries of papers in education and implications for the future; (b) *Alberta's Secondary Education Program: The Public's View* (Alberta Education, 1984b) was a symposium held as a result of questionnaires (10,000 responses), Gallup polls from public groups (1,000), and opinionnaires from students (3,000 in Grades 10 and 12). "The public also agreed that some components of the health program should be mandatory" (p. 9). Of the results cited, "77 percent of the students surveyed by the opinionnaire thought that offering a sex education course was 'important' to 'extremely important'" (p. 9); and (c) *Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee: Foundation for the Future* (Alberta Education, 1984c) basically outlined the recommendations, guiding principles, and purpose of secondary education, along with roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in education including government, school boards, education staff and administrators, students, families, and community. There was support for a health education curriculum as a regularly scheduled course with some modules as optional. As a result of this review, curricula and policies were undergoing changes including the Grades 1-12 health curricula.

9. In January 1985 the Policy Advisory Committee submitted to the Minister of Education, its proposal for amending the School Act and related legislation. The document was called *Partners in Education: Principles For a New School Act* (Alberta Education, 1985). The paper described four aspects for consideration in the School Act and legislation, which are, "The Purpose of Education and the Role of Schools," "The Governance of Education," "The Roles of Students, Parents, and Community," and "The Delivery of Education" (p. 4).

10. In June 1985 Alberta Education and the Minister of Education released the *Alberta Secondary Education Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985), which changed the course of direction for all senior high programs including the new health and career one and included eight

principles and 33 directional statements. The guiding statement for Secondary Education in Alberta as written into the Policy Statement (June 1985) is that

> the aim of education is to develop the knowledge, the skills and the positive attitudes of individuals, so that they will be self-confident, capable and committed to setting goals, making informed choices and acting in ways that will improve their own lives and the life of their community. (p. 7)

The newly proposed CALM program was to be disassociated from any previous work done and was to be a new curriculum as described in the new policy. A CALM Development Committee was struck to pull a proposal together. This committee consisted of internal Department of Education managers and personnel. The committee's proposal was for a three-credit CALM course, with additional one-credit modules to extend the course to five credits if desired. This proposal was approved by the Alberta Education Instructional Program Review and Development Committee in February 1986. As per the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy* (Alberta Government, 1985), CALM was identified as a core curriculum (p. 24).

11. In 1985 an ad hoc committee for the senior high health program developed a nine-theme draft curriculum for Grades 11 and 12, with each year's courses to receive five credits. This was presented to the Health and Physical Education Curriculum Coordinating Committee. The compositions of neither of these committees included student representatives, but apparently students' opinions were captured from the opinionnaires conducted in 1984 (3,000 Grades 10 and 12 students were canvassed). The number of actual student responses is unknown.

12. In March 1986 a Steering Committee and four subcommittees were established to develop the CALM curriculum, including the philosophy, course objectives, content, program structure and design, resources, and other supports needed. The Steering Committee

> had a balance of practitioners and stakeholders, with representatives from school based personnel (an administrator, three classroom teachers with experience in related content, and one classroom teacher inexperienced in related content), from urban, rural, private, and separate school systems; representatives of interest groups (Alberta Social Services and Community Health, Alberta Manpower, Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the University of Alberta, and the Alberta Federation of Home and School Association); and Alberta Education Personnel (program manager, special education, learning resources). (Bosetti, 1990, p. 70)

The subcommittees consisted of representatives selected specifically by superintendents and Deputy Ministers of government departments. No mention was made of students or other stakeholders such as parents or health professionals, specifically on either the Steering Committee or the subcommittees. By June 1986 the Steering Committee and four subcommittees had developed a draft CALM curriculum and had identified possible resources and supports.

13. In July 1986 Alberta Education, on the recommendation of the Steering Committee, hosted a CALM symposium. The Steering Committee wanted to ensure that the CALM curriculum would be sensitive to the needs of those impacted or affected by CALM before its implementation. Participants were invited to attend to become familiar with the CALM curriculum and to provide feedback on course impact or resources needed. Participants invited were mostly from provincial and federal government departments, public associations and community service groups, postsecondary institutions, school system consultants and administrators, teachers, parents, businesses, and students. From the *Report on Career and Life Management Symposium* (Alberta Education, 1986b, pp. 4-5), Bosetti (1990) summarized the recommendations as having

> dealt with ensuring that the process orientation be clearly visible in the curriculum guide, that the curriculum be implemented at the Grade 11 level and worth five credits, that inservice education be essential and ongoing, the themes be modified to be less self-centered and more "other oriented," that human sexuality be addressed within all themes, and that teachers be provided with strategies and a resource manual that promotes experiential learning. Finally, they recommended that CALM be "marketed at all levels," that certain themes be further developed, and that the curriculum guide should be expanded to include specified areas. (pp. 4-5)

In the write-up on the symposium in the September issue of the *Secondary Education Bulletin*, Alberta Education (1986c) stated that "participants indicated that they found the day's activities informative and a valuable means of providing involvement in the early stages of the program development process" (p. 1).

Based on the input of over 120 participants who attended this symposium, the Steering Committee made revisions and submitted a final draft of the CALM curriculum for piloting in September 1986 (Alberta Education, 1986a, pp. 4-5). Optional implementation was scheduled for September 1987 (as per Alberta Education, 1986a, p. 2).

14. Teacher in-service was provided to the field test teachers in August 1986 to prepare them for teaching CALM and using resources within their communities (*Career and Life Management Inservice and Orientation Seminar for Field Test Teachers*, Semester I, August 1986).

15. Human sexuality was approved to be integrated into the CALM program in 1986, amidst much controversy from parents, politicians, and religious groups. The human sexuality unit was therefore made optional in 1986, although originally it had been prescribed as a core part of the curriculum. "Parents have the right to exempt their child from school instruction in human sexuality education" (Alberta Education, 1989, p. 3). The only information on student

involvement in any of these discussions came from one interview with a former decision maker. There might be a link to the July 1986 symposium which had student participation.

16. In 1987 other implementation strategies were put into place, including marketing and inservice to local school administrators, teachers, government agencies, and community groups who would be responsible for and involved in the CALM curriculum implementation process. As a result of these sessions, an information manual for administrators, counselors, and teachers was developed to provide some direction, resources, and strategies for successfully implementing CALM in the school (Alberta Education, 1988b). Alberta Education agreed to provide the infrastructure for implementation and curriculum continuation through building and maintaining support networks, providing trained curriculum consultants throughout the province, preparing materials for in-service activities, providing pre-service and in-service programs for teachers by postsecondary institutions, supplying ACCESS videos for in-service, and preparing a teachers' resource manual for support with lesson planning and resources as well as student evaluation (Career and Life Management Curriculum Overview, March 1987). All of these things needed to be in place to ensure that all stakeholders would be ready for the mandatory implementation of CALM in September 1989.

17. In January 1988 the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) released its report on school health services (*Committee on School Health Services Survey Report*). This report highlighted some of the concerns regarding the new health education curriculum in schools. Although there was general support for the new curriculum, it was implemented without consultation with the obvious resource people. Financial restraints had removed the teachers' in-service, and community health nurses were viewed as being brought in to fill the gaps, but they were not seen as part of the teaching team. Resolutions were put forward by the ATA regarding the concerns raised.

> Be it resolved . . . that the role of the Community Health Nurse in the school health education program be enhanced. . . . That The Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to provide adequate resources for inservice education for all teachers required to teach the new health curriculum. . . . That The Alberta Teachers' Association urge the faculty of education in Alberta universities to develop B.Ed. program fields of study in health and health services. (p. 14)

18. In April 1988 the Deputy Minister for Alberta Education, released the document *Alberta Education, Mission, Goals and Sub-Goals: The Best Possible Education for all Alberta Schools* (Alberta Education, 1988a). Although there was no mention of student participation or involvement in improving education, there was mention of " increasing the effective involvement

of parents, community, other stakeholder groups and the private sector in the planning and delivery of educational programs and services" (p. 5).

19. In 1988, the government revised the 1970 Alberta School Act. According to a recent Alberta Education (1996e) document, *Alberta Education Regulatory Reform*,

> The School Act describes the relationship of the Minister to students, parents and school jurisdictions and provides for the system of administration and financing of education in Alberta and generally deals with the ultimate authority of the Minister with respect to all constituents in the educational system. (p. 17)

The Alberta School Act (1988; section 25.1, p. 32) also sets out the program or curriculum prescription.

20. CALM 20 was revised based on the pilots in 1987 and 1988 (Career and Life Management 20—Senior High, revised; Alberta Education, 1989). It was fully implemented throughout all high schools in Alberta in September 1989. There were still concerns and issues which had not been dealt with prior to the full implementation which included the issue of having CALM as a core course required for graduation. According to Bosetti (1990), it was a key role of the principals to facilitate their schools' readiness for the implementation of CALM, including providing psychological reassurance, directing teachers to support people (students and others) in the school and in the community, and ensuring that resources were available to make implementation possible.

21. In 1990 the Minister of Education called a forum on the Secondary Education Review. This forum included discussions about graduation requirements and other aspects of the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Government of Alberta, 1985) and Program of Studies. The stakeholder group consisted of representatives from the Chambers of Commerce, Conference of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), home and school associations, independent schools, Junior Achievement, Learning Disabilities Association, Alberta School Trustees' Association, and students. Students made up about 5%, or nine, of the 170 delegates, with two coming from rural schools and seven from Edmonton and Calgary public schools. Twenty-five issues along with solutions or recommendations were put forward from this forum, some of which focused on more "appropriate stakeholder involvement in decision making in various aspects of policy and curriculum development" (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 15). Participants at the forum said that

> curriculum development should include a variety of people with expertise. Traditional stakeholder organizations can play a significant role here, but so too can experts from outside the field of education. Expert representation can help to identify the skills to be taught, and can ensure curriculum implementation that is congruent with the secondary

> education policy, that meets the needs of culturally diverse students, that balances academic and nonacademic interests and that provides a student voice in the curriculum process. (p. 15)

22. The document "Vision for the Nineties: A Plan for Action" (Alberta Education, 1991) outlined the current priorities of the Alberta Department of Education for policy development and implementation. The results-based, content-oriented curriculum was to specify levels and expectations for learning: "Curriculum sets out what our students need to know and be able to do in a changing world. Our curriculum must reflect high standards, the needs of students, and the needs of Alberta's society and economy" (p. 31).

23. As a follow-up to the forum, *Achieving the Vision, 1991 Report* was released by Alberta Education, in which government officials stated their promise to ensure "excellence in curriculum":

> Our curriculum must set high expectations for what our students need to know and be able to do in our changing world. Our programs and learning resources must support the achievement of these high expectations. . . . The Alberta curriculum includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable all students to be well prepared for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and daily life in a changing society. (pp. 13-14)

24. Also in 1992 *The Report of the Minister's Committee on Human Sexuality Education* (Alberta Education, 1992b) was released. The report indicated support for the current policy in sexuality education in secondary schools (Alberta Education, 1989) as well as for the policies reflecting universal access to sexuality education, alternative programs, and student participation. A total of 20 recommendations were made in the report to the Minister, based on key principles related to health education, the needs of students and teachers, and the roles of schools and school boards in sexuality education.

25. CALM underwent a review and revision from 1991 to 1992, and a draft was released into the schools in September 1993 (*Achieving The Vision Report*, Alberta Education, 1992a, p. 13, and *Career and Life Management—Senior High*, Alberta Education, 1993b). Students were asked to evaluate this 1993 draft. This draft has not been revised, and it is, in fact, the document which has been under review in 1998 to the present.

26. In 1993 Alberta Education issued the *Alberta High School Graduation Requirements* as a guide to students, parents, and others. It has in many ways replaced the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985) which contained the graduation requirements and other principles.

27. Invitational Forums on Student Conduct and Violence in Schools were held in 1993 and 1994. The proceedings from each year were published and contained some strategies for

implementation. With over 100 participants in both years, students were identified as participants, and in 1993 students presented to the delegates. It is not clear from either report how many students actually attended, even with the delegates listed, because students were not identified.

28. As a result of the Secondary Education Review Forum (Alberta Education, 1990), and for other reasons, the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC) was established in October 1994. This committee was to provide advice to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Student Programs and Evaluations regarding programs, curriculum, and assessment policies from ECS to Grade 12. One student member was to be assigned to the committee by Alberta Education at the start. This committee currently has three students: one high school, one university, and one technology (Alberta Education, 1995).

29. In 1996 the Ministerial Orders and Directives (policy) on Human Sexuality Education was rewritten to include some of the principles and recommendations. The directives for HIV/AIDS in educational settings was also rewritten at this time. These directives became part of the *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* released by Alberta Education (1996d).

30. In 1996 a Business Involvement Advisory group of Alberta Education (1996a) released its *Framework for Enhancing Business Involvement in Education.* This report provides policy and legislation support for "efforts to enhance business involvement in education and to prepare students for the workplace" (p. 18) and an agreement of understanding.

31. Students also have a right to be an active member of the Parent School Councils as per the School Council Regulation (Alberta Education, 1998a), under Section 7.1: "If the School includes a senior high school program, at least one person who is a student enrolled in the high school, elected by the students enrolled in the school" (p. 3) has a right to be on the council.

32. Students currently sit on the Edmonton Public Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (Alberta Education, 1998b). This type of committee probably exists in other such jurisdictions.

33. Other documents include (a) *Deciding What Students Should Learn* (Alberta Education, 1988b), which looks at the processes or steps for policy and/or program reviews, such as CALM 20 and its policy which makes it mandatory; (b) *Curriculum Handbook for Parents* (Alberta Education, 1998c); this handbook comes out each year and provides parents and their children with the details of core curriculum and graduation requirements; (c) *The Government of Alberta's Three-Year Plan for Education:* 1998-2001 (Alberta Education, 1998e); although review of the achievements and satisfaction is given, so are strategies for improvement, but nothing has been mentioned about CALM; (d) *School Career Transitions* (Alberta Education, 1997); released in June 1997, this was to have been implemented in September 1999; and (e)

Toward a Safe and Caring School (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2000; curriculum and facilitation guides were released through the Alberta Teachers' Association for 2000.

CALM Curriculum Review (1997 to Present)

In the summer of 1997, the Minister of Education circulated a memorandum internally within Alberta Education, including the Curriculum Standards Branch, that the CALM 20 program was being reviewed for elimination from the Alberta high school curriculum as early as 1998. The Minister approved a consultation process regarding the CALM curriculum to parallel the kindergarten to Grade 9 health education review and reform processes. Data from these consultations were summarized and submitted to the then Minister of Education, for consideration.

A number of steps were taken in the consultations and report preparation. The consultant for Alberta Education obtained responses from nine focus groups and 535 questionnaires during the first three months of 1998. The respondents were invited participants located in the major cities and centers of Alberta. Individuals were invited to attend through letters, questionnaires, and information about focus groups which had been sent out to school superintendents, school councils, and principals throughout these major centers. The consultation started with questionnaires being sent out in late January and early February, and followed up with focus group discussions in February and March. About 180 of the 835 participants were students. Teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, and CALM teachers also participated in the consultation process. Data were gathered and analyzed for themes. In answer to the question, "Should there be a life-skills course in Alberta high schools?" 90% of the respondents indicated that students in Alberta would benefit from a life-skills course (CALM 20 Executive Summary; Alberta Education, 1998a). The consultant and others within the Education Curriculum Standards Branch wrote the summary report which was submitted to the Minister's Advisory Council in April, the Standing Policy Committee in May, and the Minister of Education in June. The Standing Policy Committee presentation made by teachers, parents, a doctor, a high school student, and a college student was delayed until June 23, 1998. This group discussed the benefits of CALM as a life skills course, and to urge the Committee to put forward a recommendation to keep CALM 20 as a diploma requirement for high school graduation. They told the committee that

> we believe that CALM 20, or a living skills course similar to CALM 20, should be a high school diploma requirement. It is the only required course which addresses life skill issues that ultimately lead to the creation of well-informed and responsible citizens. CALM 20 supports the academic core of high school programming and its course content

> forms an integral part of the foundation for healthy, successful life. Early intervention and promotion of healthy development is essential if we wish to have healthy, happy, productive adults. CALM will provide students with the courage, confidence and personal presentation skills to succeed in our rapidly changing society. (Committee to Keep CALM 20, 1998)

The delay of this presentation also affected the timelines for the submission of the summary report to the Minister of Education, who was to have made a final decision by the end of June as to whether or not the CALM 20 program would remain, be revised, be replaced by alternatives, or be removed from the approved curriculum for Alberta schools. The Minister's decision to retain but revise CALM came in the fall of 1999.

Current Status of CALM and Alberta Education

This historical account provides the context in which this study takes place. Alberta's School Act, education policies, and resulting programs for kindergarten to Grade 12 have undergone numerous reviews and transitions since 1970. Indeed, many of the education policies and programs, particularly on health education, have undergone several revisions within a relatively short time span of 5 to 10 years. Alberta Education's reasons for these reviews and revisions include "an outdated program, new knowledge about student learning and development, the changing needs of students and society, new knowledge in a subject, the need for continuity and consistency among programs, and major policy changes" (Alberta Education, 1998a, p. 9).

Between 1991 and 1998, the CALM curriculum had received two formal reviews and many informal ones; most were critical of the content of CALM, of the fact that it was a core program required for graduation, and of the difficulties students were having scheduling in CALM with other academic core courses. Consequently, Alberta Education proposed more changes to the CALM program (Alberta Education, 1992b; G. Vivone-Vernon, personal communication, Fall, 1997). With (a) consultations on the CALM curriculum completed in 1998, (b) a report submitted to the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC) and to the Minister of Education in early 1999 and (c) an official announcement in 1999 made by the Minister of Education that CALM 20 would remain but be revised, the question focused on who would be invited to participate in the various steps of the CALM curriculum and policy reform processes.

It is also important to note that since this study began in 1998 with interviews, document reviews, and field observations in the CALM review process, there have been some changes in Alberta Education and its plans to release a reformed CALM curriculum. In early 1999, Alberta Education was merged with the department of Advanced Education into one department called

Alberta Learning. In the context of this study, *Alberta Education* has been used throughout with reference to *Alberta Learning* in discussing events from the latter part of 1999 into 2000. In early 2000, a draft of the revised CALM curriculum was released for comments from health services and other stakeholders prior to its approval for scheduled piloting in some of the high schools in September 2000. Since January 2000, the curriculum has been renamed twice, from Life Skills 10 (Alberta Learning, 2000c) to Senior High Life Skills. The latest version released June 2000 was once again called Career and Life Management (CALM) 20. The Life Skills 10 course had been intended for Grade 10, but discussions prompted a move back to it being a general high school course with an opt-in consent from parents for Grade 10 students to take the controversial modules. The Senior High Life Skills draft (Alberta Learning, 2000c) was scheduled for piloting in September but has once again been placed on hold pending decisions from new leadership within Alberta Learning and the new Minister. Therefore, for another year the 1993 draft of CALM 20 (Alberta Education, 1993b) will remain in place. Nothing has been changed with the related policy for core curriculum. CALM 20 remains a core curriculum and is therefore mandatory for graduation under the original *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy* (Alberta Government, 1985), and within the *Graduation Requirements* (Alberta Education, 1993a) document.

Reasons for the CALM Review

There were many reasons for this latter review as stated by various individuals at Alberta Education at the time. Some of these reasons included the following:

- The course has never had a measuring tool or diploma examination like other core courses. According to a participant in the study from Alberta Education, "It would have been interesting in hindsight to have had a diploma exam for CALM even though it is a process-oriented course."
- Those in the corporate sector were concerned about students needing more career preparation than health education. The push was for more time in Career and Technology studies and topics.
- A number of parents and others expressed concerns about the controversial subject areas of CALM, including sexual health education and HIV/AIDS. Two very concerned groups had apparently written memos about what CALM offered that did not meet with their approval. Politicians and policy makers would need to address these concerns as public figures.

- Although CALM had advocates through teachers, students, and health professionals, these advocates supported CALM as a part of the Program of Studies, but they felt that CALM needed to be revised and that teachers needed in-service or other training to teach it.
- Students and teachers expressed concerns about the redundancy of CALM given the topics covered in Grade 9 or earlier.
- Students and parents were concerned about CALM being a core program required for graduation. The time schedules for academic students in particular were filled with other core courses they would need as part of the entrance requirements for postsecondary institutions.
- One bureaucrat with Alberta Education felt that CALM was never viewed or valued the same way that other core courses were. CALM was never equal to core courses and was not valued by anyone including students, teachers, administrators, and even parents.
- According to another Alberta Education bureaucrat, the expectations of the original CALM course were never met by students, teachers, and parents, who felt that CALM was not a relevant course and that the experiences gained from the course were dependent on the experiences of teachers and students. Good experiences were rare.

Chapter Summary: Documented and Observed Practices and Discourses

According to the various interviews and focus groups, there had been verbal support for student and stakeholder involvement in some aspects of curriculum and policy development and reform, if not at the provincial level, then at the local school level. But the documents and observations did not support a great deal of stakeholder involvement, particularly of students or even parents. Even with policy statements and forum reports containing recommendations to increase stakeholder and student involvement in education reform processes, there has not been any evidence or understandings that this has happened for curriculum or policy reform.

About 3,000 Grades 10 and 12 students had an opportunity to respond to an opinionnaire for the Secondary Education Review in the mid 1980s, and students attended a symposium in 1986. Teachers were noted to be involved in committees and other curriculum and resource development activities. It was affirmed verbally and in documents that students and stakeholders were more involved in discussions concerning education reform after 1990, and starting with the Secondary Education Review Forum with the then Minister of Education. With the CALM review starting in 1998, students were involved in surveys and some consultations. There are documents to support this.

Documents, reports, and observations confirm that students have not been involved to any great extent at the provincial or local levels. From specific documents, it appeared that CALM 20, the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement*, and other policies, including the Alberta School Act (1988), had undergone a number of reviews and revisions. There were many influencing factors for these reviews and revisions, and none included students directly. The practices and discourses indicated that there was little intention on the part of the decision makers to involve many stakeholders, particularly students, in any program and policy decisions. The stakeholders and students were to have received the same opportunities for input, but it appears to be, as many have said in Chapter 5, just "lip service."

CHAPTER 7

THE POSSIBILITIES OR ALTERNATIVES: CONSCIOUS CHOICES REGARDING REFORM AND STAKEHOLDERS

> In an effort to regain students lost to home and on-line schooling, the Sturgeon School Division is starting its own cyber-school. April 19 [2000] trustees approved a pilot home/on-line schooling program to be affiliated with the Sturgeon Learning Centre and Camilla School in Riviere Qui Barre. It is "a systematic and deliberate plan to address the needs of families being served by non-resident boards," stated the proposal brought forward by Learning Centre principal Garnet Goertzen. . . . Trustees indicated support, although board chair Therese Gervais had reservations about a shifting from a traditional school community. (Staff, 2000, p. 4)

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides a more detailed look at the conscious choices made by decision makers and others in program and policy analysis involving stakeholders, and particularly at the alternatives and possibilities to the discourses and practices described in Chapter 5. All of these relate back to the central questions about the processes for education curriculum and policy reform, and the involvement of students in these processes.

Based on the understandings of the participants and on information derived from primary and secondary documents and my personal notes, a number of categories and conclusions were derived for the discussions to follow:

- A central understanding was that reform processes and student involvement in them needed to be meaningful.
- From a provincial perspective, there needed to be more planning and direction for involving stakeholders, particularly students, even though the Minister has the authority to consult with students and others at any time, and as needed.
- Many challenges and limitations were identified in involving students in curriculum and policy reform.
- Communication about curriculum and policy reviews was needed to inform those with an interest to provide input.
- There were many possibilities and alternatives for student involvement identified.
- It was felt that other stakeholders needed to be involved, other than students.
- CALM presented an exceptional opportunity for student and stakeholder involvement.
- Recommendations were made to improve stakeholder, particularly student, involvement.

The data supporting the above conclusions or claims have been captured under several key headings of "Provincial Direction," "Challenges and Limitations to Student Involvement," "Possibilities for Student Involvement," "CALM as an Opportunity," "Other Stakeholders," and "Communication of Reviews."

Provincial Direction

This section provides some of the possibilities and alternatives for stakeholder and student involvement at the provincial level. Participants also raised concerns about involving as well as not involving stakeholders, particularly students.

First of all, decision makers said that there was nothing that prevented either the Minister of Education or the Regulatory Review Committee from involving students at any time. If students were needed, they were included. Second, decision makers found it difficult to come up with possibilities or alternatives for student involvement without consideration of other stakeholders or groups, or the processes involved. Essentially, they hinted that there needed to be a joint planning mechanism in place to coordinate efforts to make student involvement possible. And it was important to most of the decision makers that student involvement, in particular, was meaningful to students as well as to the process. As one decision maker (Alberta Education, 1998) pointed out:

> I just think that what we need to be doing, as each of the issues or the policy review, as each opportunity comes up, we always keep in mind how to best get the broadest possible participation from our stakeholders in these things. . . . And we're getting into now more and more attempts to get cross-agency consultations. We're developing plans and some strategies to get better consultation with regional health authorities, with the family and community services authorities. How can we develop sort of joint planning mechanisms and consultation processes with them? These will be new things for us, and at each step along the way, where we're bringing people into the process, how can we expand it? How do we get meaningful input in here? . . . So in each case there is not going to be a single way to do it. . . . We can't automatically assume that "Oh, yes, gotta have a student. Where's our token student this time?" Drag him in and plunk him down at the table and say, "Oh, well, this is your opportunity"—no more than I would do the same thing with the token trustee or token whatever. But I think we're moving into greater collaboration.

Another decision maker suggested that maybe there needs to be a policy in place for student involvement in curriculum and policy activities. This person also suggested that Alberta Education needed to be encouraged to utilize students more, wherever they can, and needs to think of unique ways to involve students, as in focus groups or "face-to-face interaction." However, the decision makers also pointed out that there are always some limitations to consider when involving students in decision-making processes of any kind. Decision makers generally felt that students should probably have more involvement, "as long as they don't get the feeling that they have a right to make the decisions. That is a fine line to walk," or that "From the development of curriculum content, I think the input is valuable, but it shouldn't be a determining factor necessarily because of other factors and what goes into a curriculum" (decision maker, Edmonton Public School District, 1998). The general consensus of the decision makers was that the possibility of having students involved to any great extent in general curriculum development and reform would be very slim:

> I hesitate to involve students in curriculum planning, students still in the school system, in curriculum planning to too great an extent because of the very nature of the fact they may not always have the opportunity to experience the why and what society is attempting to do with this curriculum. (decision maker, Edmonton Public School District, 1998)

Regarding student involvement in policy development, decision makers had some of the same perceptions with one exception— graduation requirements. "It wouldn't be significant to have them [students] involved in looking at the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy*, but to look at the issue of 'What should be the graduation requirements today in 1998? Now, that's significant for sure" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

Decision makers felt it would be significant to involve alumni more: "With recent grads? No, I don't think so; I don't think we've made any focused or concerted effort to do that [involve them], and it probably wouldn't be a bad idea" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). Another decision maker suggested that alumni needed to be tracked and asked their advice on programs.

> I think districts—our own district is one case in point—we're going to have to start tracking students, maybe sending questionnaires to students who have graduated, or asking principals to, if students come back to visit their school, ask them a few questions about this program or that program, or just deliberately invite a whole bunch to a meeting one night and ask them, or provide some mechanism. (decision maker, Edmonton Public Schools, 1998)

Parents said that learning needed to occur in both directions—from the top down and the bottom up. We, as a society, could not continue to engage in the top-down decision-making process without consequences, for either the short term or the long term. Parents felt that particularly with a course such as CALM, students should be viewed as stakeholders and should be involved with teachers and parents in making some of the content and delivery decisions. If students are not involved, do the decision makers really want to hear from any of the stakeholders at all? Or is lip service the approach which government wants to take?

> As I said before, I think they're [students are] stakeholders; they have to be at the table. The more involved you become in things, the more of a stake you have in them, and so I encourage us to get the students involved. . . . If these discussions are already taking place and they don't have students at them, it looks like we've left out a pretty important stakeholder at those discussions. And so, I guess then you have to ask yourself whether they really want to hear from all the stakeholders. What do they want to hear? Do they want to hear what they're intending to hear, or do they really want to have a full range of the opinions that are out there? It becomes questionable when you start revising based on the feedback of a few, or a selected few. (urban parent, 1999)

For CALM specifically, health professionals suggested that government take a more academic approach and do a proper research study into CALM and its related issues. Then a more appropriate stand can be taken as to what and why decisions need to be made in certain ways. Through this approach, there will be less chance for subsequent conflicts about the content or other aspects of CALM. However, such an approach needs to start at the policy and political levels:

> Maybe there needs to be some separation from education and politics so that there is more latitude to do what's the right thing, not the easy thing. I know they're in a difficult situation, but I think that some of those issues are addressed less than they were a few years ago because they want to avoid any kind of public reaction; all the school boards do. They want to be able to do their job, educate the students; and health issues such as sexual orientation or whether someone's sexually active, or STDs, body image, all those things cloud how things go, so schools don't want to address them. If a school starts addressing them they could start losing students, because, my goodness, then people would think that kids are more sexually active at a particular school. So I think there needs to be a stand from above to say, "These things are important. They need to be covered," and to give permission to local schools, then, to be able to do it, because they're in a very difficult situation right now. And I think it starts at a policy level, at a political level. (health professional, 1999)

Possibilities for Student Involvement

There were many possibilities identified for student involvement. The possibility already existed for students to challenge the graduation requirements. Elected decision makers and the bureaucrats at Alberta Education pointed out the possibility of involving students along with other stakeholders, not so much in the *Three-Year Business Plan for Education* (Alberta Education, 1996b) which replaced the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985), but with other guidelines and policies. In fact, one decision maker for Alberta Education (1998) stated that

> the *Guide to Education* is updated annually, and the *Program Policy Manual* is also updated on a continuing basis. In fact, the government has interjected what's almost a sunset clause on policies in there that they have to be reviewed, and we have to, if you

> like, justify their continued existence on a continuing basis on a three- or four-year cycle. So yes, that gets updated yearly. And again, in giving consideration to those updates, that's where we would involve students and other stakeholders.

Again, most perceptions returned to the idea that students would provide more valuable input at the local levels and would more likely follow policy if they were involved in the development or setting of policies at the local level. Although some decision makers were uncertain whether or not students who dropped out of school would have much to say that would be meaningful about how curriculum was put together, they thought that students in alternative schools had not been tapped for input. Some pointed out that the possibility is there for the taking by Alberta Education. They felt that the playing field needed to be leveled so that all students could participate:

> There we tend to be fairly selective when we do that, and I think maybe that was part of our problem. Also with the Secondary School Review, we're looking at students who primarily intend to go to university or college, and we . . . neglect the people who are just out on their own looking for a job. . . . The people who will cause the problems later on in terms of earnings and in terms of contributing to society are the people who leave school maybe in Grade 11, maybe in Grade 10, even Grade 12, and then they go out to get a job. Somehow we haven't found a way of capturing their views. I guess that's an issue. (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

One decision maker suggested that it is a matter of selecting the time and place and ensuring that opportunities for students are available for CALM or other curriculum and policy reviews. There were many possibilities mentioned. One significant way to involve students is through their student councils or even Parent School Councils.

> I feel that student involvement through student councils and student governance is really, really, really important at the school level, and we need to encourage that. I know a number of the school jurisdictions try to encourage participation of students with respect to the governance of the school board or the school jurisdiction itself. . . . It's *vitally* important that they [students] be a part of the school councils; I think they *should* have interest in what's happening in the school jurisdiction, because again, it affects their lives at the school level. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

Other possibilities mentioned for involving students included technology and access to curriculum and policy through the Internet. It was emphasized that students could always have opportunities to respond in this way. However, it was mentioned that Alberta Education needed to find other innovative ways to reach students and alumni through visits or wherever they gather, as in malls, lounges, or even bars. Research may need to open more doors for consultation with students. As several decision makers pointed out, students may need to be thought of as partners so that they can actively participate in curriculum and policy reviews: "If the student is going to be a partner in education, that he's treated as a partner. . . . If we're partners; if we're really partners, we should be involved, yes, yes" (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). As mentioned, if students are partners within a recognized group or organization, they also have a better chance of presenting to the various committees such as the Standing Policy Committee on Education and Training or the Regulatory Review Committee, which looks at policies.

The majority of high school students and alumni felt that it was important that reviews of the curriculum and policies be done on a regular basis and that students and alumni be included in these, even if their views were not used in making final decisions at the provincial level. They believed that they should be involved in curriculum and policy reviews at both the provincial and local levels: "Oh, yes, those meetings should be regular. Reviews like these [with CALM] should happen all the time" (alumni, 1998). Students and alumni said that they only had to be invited by Alberta Education and others to provide input into curriculum and policy, and they would offer all kinds of suggestions:

> When they review the curriculum, just have us come in and talk about it too; don't just exclude us from being able to talk about what we have to learn. . . . Or you can appoint someone from each grade to go in and express for the whole grade, just to get someone—it's our education. (rural high school student, 1999)

> Maybe if we contribute to the review process and nothing changes, we'll still have the experience of contributing to something so that later you can maybe try and change something else. (urban high school student, 1999)

When and if given the opportunity to talk to Alberta Education about experiences or concerns with the curriculum and graduation requirements or other policies impacting on students, most students and alumni felt that they would take the opportunity:

> I think a good idea would be—but it would have to be on the government's part *first*—I think that they should set up some sort of thing. They should come to the schools and make themselves available to be told this stuff. Even in high school, they should be coming to the schools, come at lunch hour or something, something like they do here, be down in the cafeteria and make themselves available to this kind of stuff, so it's an actual person that you're talking to and telling, and it's not you sending them a letter or something to tell them, or you signing a petition saying whatever. It would sink in more . . . if I actually had the person to talk to and say, "This is how I feel about it.' . . . If people in Alberta Education come down and meet with kids, observe classes, talk to the children, make themselves known, take down the barriers, treat them like friends, and I don't know, so maybe let the kids know that if they have concerns about school or things they like about what teachers do, and don't like, "Here's my phone number," and talk with the kids, I think that would be good. (alumni, 1998)

Alberta Education could use any number of approaches to reach students in schools, including focus groups, whole class discussions with teachers or others, discussion tables at each school where student representatives from every grade or class could present, questionnaires or surveys, website access, and chats. Incentives would be required for some students to become involved in these activities. The school setting itself provides a safe venue for increasing the chances of students becoming involved:

> The whole purpose of doing it in school time is that the kids have to be there anyway, so we're going to nab them when they're right there because then we have everyone's attention. The only problem is to get people to take it seriously and to put a little bit of effort into it and some incentive. So I was thinking maybe, I think probably each class could spend one class period on it where they get into a discussion group about that particular course, and then you have the in-depth analysis of that course, and everybody is participating. And if it's in class time anyway, then people are going to hopefully get involved, because you have to be there anyway, and if you're going to skip, then you're going to skip, but— (urban high school student, 1999)

Course evaluations at the end of courses and at the end of high school were also viewed as important possibilities for students and graduates to offer their opinions and suggestions based on their experiences.

Although questionnaires and surveys were mentioned as another means of gaining information from students and graduates, these methods also presented challenges which would need to be considered to make it possible for more than just a few students or graduates to participate. The students and alumni both felt that Alberta Education has the ability and the authority to ensure that *every student and recent graduate* provides feedback on courses and other aspects of the educational process. The main problem is that

> they don't do enough questioning of us. Yes, they do the surveys and so forth, but I find the surveys in general cover too small a group. I have never once done a survey about school, never, and so my opinions about it aren't being put forth. I think that they should be sending out questionnaires to *all* the students about *all* of their classes so that that way they could actually get the entire student base and what they think about each and every individual course that they're taking. . . . So then they get much more detailed feedback. (urban high school student, 1999)

In addition to gathering student feedback through questionnaires or "blanket surveys," students suggested possibilities through technology. All students, particularly high schools, have access to computers and the skills to use interactive programs. Alberta Education

> should set up some sort of web site or something like that where they could ask their typical questions, but then say, "Are there are areas—?" because they never ask you if there's any other areas where you might be concerned. . . . Maybe they could make it mandatory that everyone submits a form. (urban high school student, 1999)

Essentially, the students and alumni implied that if Alberta Education was really interested in obtaining the feedback from students or even teachers about their students' comments, then Alberta Education has the capability and authority to do that.

Teachers were of the opinion that all stakeholders, including students, should be at the table discussing the same things about students' learning needs. And in order to understand better what the roles of students would be in these discussions regarding curriculum and policy and the link with students' needs, teachers felt that there should also be active discussions directly with students about their involvement in education reform. After all, some students in high school are already 18 years old and have voting rights. Teachers felt that if students were making decisions about who should be the premier of Alberta, then they should be able to make decisions about their education.

> A lot of students are eighteen already, and that's considered an adult in Alberta. And so if we're not taking their opinions seriously, then we're contradicting ourselves. We're allowing them to be an adult and allowing them to vote. That's a very important decision, so how can we not allow them to make a comment on a curriculum?" (outreach teacher, 1999)

It was recognized by teachers that it was difficult to get students to the table. Different approaches needed to be implemented, such as broadly dispersed surveys or questionnaires, discussions with teachers, or student forums. Teachers said they could obtain information from their students which could also be passed along to Alberta Education. But teachers were asking for a long-range plan that included stakeholders' input, resources, piloting of courses, evaluation of courses and graduation requirements, and so on. Any major curriculum changes should be piloted and student feedback obtained, but adequate time is required to do that: "A piloting process is really important. We probably need more than one year to pilot major curriculum change" (urban high school teacher, 1999). Teachers suggested that resources, too, could be assessed by students—resources are critical to the success of the program implementation.

Parents, like teachers, felt that it was important and relevant to have students, along with parents, teachers, and others, involved in curriculum review so that everyone is working on the same program throughout Alberta. It is important to have different viewpoints about how things are done in different areas. Parents stressed the need to have curriculum consistent from school to school in case students transfer from one school or district to another:

> It is very important in the aspect that we are all doing the same thing through Alberta; we're getting the same type of education then. And then it's again just having that viewpoint from how things are run here to how things are run here, and someone will have really a good point that somebody else may look at. So I think it's just that vast mass of information that would make it better. (rural parent, 1999)

Parents suggested that students from each school could be involved in focus groups, and representatives from these groups could go on to other stakeholder meetings. From the parents' perspective, it is important to have representations of those individuals who are not doing so well academically as well as those in the 98 percentile range:

> You could seek to get focus groups from each of the schools, and you could look at one or two representatives from each of the classes that participate in the courses you're speaking about, and you could engage in focus discussions with them with a moderator who doesn't take sides, but more tries to get them to be educated about the process. You could also then have people delegated or chosen from that group of students to then go on, maybe one or two people to go and sit with other stakeholders that are now involved in the process. So it probably would have a number of different levels, and I think the student body themselves would probably have to choose who they would want to represent them on those committees. (rural parent, 1999)

Having students involved in the process provides them with critical thinking skills and with the ability to look at all sides of an issue. The whole process of student involvement is an educational and learning experience not only for the students, but also for teachers, parents, and decision makers within Alberta Education. For example, with CALM, the experience of each student will be different, and their views about whether CALM remains or goes will be different. Some students need CALM, and others may not think the same way. These different perspectives and reasons are important to gather in order to reform CALM or make other decisions about it. Students' voices can come and should come from different sources, not just from a few students, teachers, counselors, or parents:

> They say it's better to see it [controversy] in front of you than to have it come up from behind. So I would say that if they end up choosing students who may not agree with your perspectives or who are quite contrary and don't value it, I wouldn't say that they should be people who are *not* selected to sit on the committees. I think what you're looking for are reflective individuals, critical thinkers, people who are motivated to be involved and seek change, if change is what you're looking for. And so it shouldn't just be the best and the brightest who sit on the committees. I could think of other criteria for those individuals, but it certainly wouldn't be just the student with the ninety-eight-percent average. It may be the students who aren't doing so well, because obviously we're not captivating them, and we need to know about that population. (rural parent, 1999)

Involvement of Other Stakeholders

Alternatives or other possibilities for having student involvement, as suggested by high school students and alumni, included working with graduates and teachers. Students and alumni agreed that recent graduates from high school and those who have been out for one or two years experiencing postsecondary education or the workforce would offer the best perspective on what was relevant in the high school curriculum:

> Just out-of-high-school students would probably have the best idea of what was effective or not throughout high school, because they've just done it, and they're a little more mature in their decision-making. . . . But I would think probably getting someone who's maybe a year out, and you remember it a lot more. (alumnus, 1999)

The high school students felt that it should not just be

> the graduating students commenting on something from Grade 10, because they can't really remember. It's hard to remember the specifics like where you learned it. But if you are a Grade 11 student talking about Grade 10, that would make a lot more sense. (rural high school student, 1999)

Teachers, too felt that they needed to be involved more and consulted more in curriculum and policy reform processes. Teachers, like students, needed to feel more comfortable expressing their views. Teachers said that there needed to be more teachers involved and taking a stand for students' involvement, particularly regarding courses such as CALM.

Teachers also felt that graduates in postsecondary education or in the workforce would be able to offer their opinions about what school did for them, what could have been done better or differently, and what should be offered: "I'd love to see the 19- or 20-year-olds surveyed to see what were valuable aspects for them in curriculum, what processes did they really learn as far as decision making" (rural high school teacher, 1999). They felt the potential for involving alumni was great. Alumni or graduates could be involved in different methods of curriculum and policy reform, particularly with a course such as CALM. Some teachers also felt that some of the dropouts needed to be involved in discussions as well: What made them leave school and the education system?

> There might have been a group of kids who might have been very bright, who were bored out of their faces, who have gone, and succeed, and do very well in life. Never did do CALM, probably flunked Grade 7, 8, and 9 health because they never handed anything in basically. And go through life and do very well, pick up books that they want to read when they decide to read them, and do well. What about those ones? I think those kids need a voice, to hear what other things you might want to learn about. (rural high school teacher, 1999)

Teachers, too, felt they needed to become more involved and become active participants in the curriculum and policy reform processes. Curriculum has really been designed for teachers to follow and not for students directly. Students benefit from the achievement of the learners' outcomes as measured by their accomplishments on tests or marks, which presents some challenges for teaching and learning in CALM. The measuring stick for CALM is very vague compared to that for other courses such as the sciences or mathematics. Students look for their marks, as do their parents, and with CALM this has been a challenge, especially when it becomes competitive for students. This will have a huge impact on student participation and student involvement, as well as teachers' perceptions of teaching CALM.

> Very few people that I have met talk about curriculum. They talk about the curriculum as a piece of paper, this object. They follow this object. This object is dictating to them. They don't talk about it as a relationship. They don't live the curriculum. It's an object that's been given to them, and they're kind of fearful of it. They don't really know what to do with it, or they know so well what to do with it that there's no room for anything else. And so every little letter is—it's like the literal interpretation of their curriculum. . . . So yes, there's this kind of continuum. I don't hear very many people talking about, "What does it mean to have equitable relationships in our curriculum?" People won't talk about that. Teachers don't talk about that. And if you talk that way, you're considered a little strange. (outreach teacher, 1999)

There are, of course, others who work with or live with these students who can represent students' views or needs, including health professionals, teachers, parents, social services, and other front-line people. However, it is often difficult for these other stakeholders to become involved because (a) their livelihood might come from government or government-funded programs, or (b) they might be too busy, and advocating is very time consuming. These environmental factors make it very difficult to have stakeholders provide their point of view:

> Teachers are really funded by government, essentially, and so if they cause much of a reaction, their job can be quite uncomfortable. . . . I think the other thing we see with stakeholders is that they're very busy surviving, . . . and so doing things such as advocating is very difficult. I guess we all have a responsibility to try and state our views in a way that will be heard, but I think it's a difficult thing to do, particularly in an environment that may not really encourage you to do that. (health professional, 1999)

There needs to be a recognition by Alberta Education that many stakeholders need to be included in decision-making processes regarding education curriculum and policy. There also needs to be acceptance by school administrators as to the problem with courses such as CALM and what needs to happen to include stakeholder input. Alberta Education needs to otherwise be clear about their agenda and who and why certain people are invited and others not:

> So when you're getting people around the table or if you're asking certain groups, let's say up front what the agenda is. Let's be very clear why we're asking the Alberta whatever, commerce or whoever; let's be very clear why we're asking that group so that everything is above board. (health professional, 1999)

It has become apparent that no one group can do much to influence educational changes alone. Therefore, the move towards having students as partners with health professionals, teachers, and parents would reflect a broad scope of community endorsement:

> Alone, I'm not sure how they [students] would be heard, but certainly as partners, as partners with parents and as partners with whatever other groups. And I think that's what it takes, is sort of a partnership kind of approach where you have a strong base, and then having all the others, whether it's health professionals or teachers, or that endorsing as well. But it seems to me that would be most appealing and would certainly reflect a broad scope of community endorsement by having a variety of partners. (health professional, 1999)

CALM as an Opportunity for Involvement

The majority of decision makers felt that the CALM curriculum presented a unique opportunity or possibility for having students involved, even in the development of curriculum and policy as it pertains to graduation requirements. "I think they can also have some input into content, because I think if you ask many students, there are certain aspects of the CALM curriculum, certain pieces of it, that they would feel would not be relevant" (decision maker, Edmonton Public Schools, 1998). This, they suggested, could happen at the local as well as the provincial level. However, it was also pointed out by many of the decision makers from Alberta Education that many decisions for curriculum and policy have become decentralized to local schools or school districts. Therefore, decisions at the provincial level primarily involve curriculum development specifically around learner outcomes and resources, as well as policies concerning graduation requirements and education purpose and focus. Therefore, they felt that the possibilities of involving students at the provincial level were becoming less likely. However, the decision makers felt that the CALM review still remained the exception, and Alberta Education should be consulting more with students, whether it be through drafts of the curriculum or during pilot implementation:

> That's one thing we learned from the Secondary Review, is that the students can react to something. Sometimes we're not that good in terms of focusing on what their needs will be in the future, but they certainly can look at something and suggest, "There's certain changes that could be made here." . . . I think that once you've got something in place, before you implement, then to get student reactions, I think that is good. (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

Students and alumni agreed that the possibilities for student involvement would especially fit with the CALM curriculum review because of the direct impact it has or could have on students' personal lives:

> It is important that there is student input, because they aren't taxpayers or anything now, but they will be, and they will be members of society, and we want to make sure that they have what they need to survive in the real world. (alumnus, 1999)

All of the high school students and alumni agreed that CALM should not be eliminated but that it did need to be revised in both its content and delivery and that the mandatory requirement for CALM also needed to be revisited. Students and alumni felt that they should be consulted for input into decisions on the content and delivery of CALM. Students can also reflect on their teachers and the challenges that they face in teaching CALM without the appropriate training, experiences, or resources. They could also comment on the relevancy and how current the content and information was and needs to be. Along with CALM as a course, they could provide some suggestions on its scheduling over weeks, semesters, or years. But the most frequently mentioned concern about CALM from both students and alumni was the relevancy of the course. If the curriculum is relevant to students, they can tolerate the delivery, good or bad, and accept that CALM is mandatory for graduation:

> The most important thing is relevancy of what we're taking, because I think that there should be courses like that [CALM] and students should be learning things like that. And if they can make it relevant and they can make it so that it applies to at least most of the students, . . . that everyone needs to know, but I think it's a good thing to have something like that, just if they can make it more relevant. (alumnus, 1998)

The issue of relevancy was also linked to practicality. Students from the urban and rural high schools had many common issues for both relevancy and practicality, and rural students indicated additional challenges related to accessing certain resources or services which were not available to them. For outreach students, the issues of relevancy and practicality were particularly noteworthy. Outreach students felt that their life experiences were such that CALM was no longer helping them with their life issues and challenges, and that

> everything that they [teachers] teach is because they have to teach it, nothing more. It's not like it's personal to them or anything. If we don't want to learn it, they're not going to get hurt by it. Like I said earlier, they should teach more about the things that are happening now, things that would actually help us determine life in the future, help us to grow in the future, and in the present too, instead of things like loving ourselves, looking in the mirror and saying, "You're gorgeous; you're beautiful." (outreach student, 1999)

In addition, all students and alumni suggested that the redundancy of the content be closely examined from elementary to junior and senior high courses. This problem should be resolvable with students and teachers providing input:

> So if you're a CALM 10 teacher, you should be getting someone who teaches Health 9 to talk about it, because they can say, "Oh, no, no. We cover that in Grade 9. You don't have to cover it again!" And then you can do new material which will make it more interesting for the kids and benefit them more. (rural high school student, 1999)

Students suggested that if Alberta Education took the time now to talk to students in CALM classes and with graduates, the problem with the revision would be decreased or eliminated. "You [Alberta Education] could spend a day walking into classes and talking to CALM classes" (urban high school student, 1999). "And maybe even look at the curriculum on paper as it's written up. It may seem like a great idea, but to sit through the course for four months and listening to the teacher present it to you, it's completely different" (alumnus, 1998).

Teachers, like the students and alumni, generally felt that CALM needed to be revised. Some teachers said, "Treat it with the respect it deserves, or don't have it." Others said, "CALM is definitely a vehicle to have a great influence on young people in our society, to bring about some solutions to some of these things that are very troublesome." Teachers realize that students are very critical of CALM, and those students who have some voice and choice in the curriculum see more relevancy in their courses than those who do not have much choice. All students, however, must take CALM to graduate; that is not a choice. Teachers were told by students that the course was not relevant, which is a problem, and teachers are bound to teach it whether it is relevant or not. "We as adults have difficulty doing that [seeing the irrelevance] because we're approaching the whole thing from our adult perspective" (rural high school teacher, 1999). What made things worse according to teachers was that CALM is still in its latest draft form since 1993; as a result it has never received respect from students, teachers, or government; and yet it is a graduation requirement. Other aspects are also not taken seriously. Teachers said they require in-service training or certification to teach it. They have also experienced challenges from parents about CALM. Some parents have a misconception that CALM is mainly sex education:

> They [the parents] are not just an interested parent; they're interested in something specific. . . . I do know with that review [of CALM], that most of the people who spoke to it from the parents' side didn't want to have sexuality education. It's a small part of the curriculum, but I'm sure if they could dump that, there would never be a problem with teaching CALM. (rural high school teacher, 1999)

Teachers said that CALM needs to be more flexible and adaptable to meet students' needs and to allow for lack of access to resources in rural communities or outreach schools. The CALM curriculum has the potential to be taught in alternative fashion, such as with contextual-based learning methods or integration into other courses. It was also important to look at the diversity of student needs and skills and follow the elements that Alberta Education promotes:

> Knowledge, skills, attributes. Reaching out to the alternate program is a step anyway in the right direction. . . . And a lot of CALM curriculum uses very mainstream paradigms of thinking about things. And there's very little opportunity to go beyond that, and that's

> problematic, because if you're really going to use those skills, you need to know how to work that, but you also need to know how to work *out* of that paradigm, and I don't think that's encouraged at all. (outreach teacher, 1999)

Challenges and Limitations with Student and Stakeholder Involvement

Decision makers indicated that concerns will always arise when stakeholders are involved in major decision-making processes. Decision makers expressed two concerns with the possibility of student involvement. One was the potential for student militancy about wanting program or policy changes their way:

> I think students can be involved, but I don't think students should necessarily be militantly involved and saying that "We want this, this, this, and this," sort of unrestricted, and I think there's some concern on the part of some people about that, but it doesn't have to be the way it is. . . . In Southern Alberta . . . students were promised decision-making authority in the program. It went to extreme lengths and decimated the program. . . . Students acting in an advisory capacity, I have absolutely no problem with that, and I think that would be more than sufficient to make people feel they're involved. (decision maker, Edmonton Public Schools, 1998)

Another concern mentioned, although not as major, was the representativeness needed to get adequate student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform discussions. They saw the possibility to involve large numbers of students, but recognized challenges in doing so. Some decision makers suggested using questionnaires, having teachers surveying students, and using the Internet as good possibilities, but focus groups were not ruled out. The bottom line for most decision makers was changing their attitude to reflect: "everyone has a contribution to make" (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

Students suggested that students needed incentives to encourage their involvement. Students said that this would be viewed as a challenge for Alberta Education. One incentive for students to become involved actively with Alberta Education would be a commitment that what they have to say will be used in some way with curriculum or policy change and that their voice makes a difference:

> I think maybe the government has to make a commitment to actually listen to us. I think from that side as well, they have to participate. . . . If they promise a commitment, say that they'll really do something about it. And maybe also the board might have to take a bit more of an open-minded approach towards students and their requests and think about it as more of a whole body than just a minority of people. (urban high school student, 1999)

A second incentive identified by students was to see large numbers of their peers actively encouraged by Alberta Education to participate through invitations to attend formal or informal discussions with the Minister or with Alberta Education, or to forums, focus groups, surveys, and other venues. This would be a strong indication of having or seeking representativeness from student populations and of being sensitive to the concerns of the majority of students from urban, rural, and outreach or charter schools, as well as to the diversity of students:

> The other problem is that they invariably don't cover the minorities in schools when they do these surveys. . . . You're taking it out of all the majority, out of the minority, a bit of both? Where is this information coming from? . . . So the information that is taken isn't taken necessarily from the entire population. (urban high school student, 1999)

The fact that there were only three students on the Program Assessment Advisory Committee, which students had only recently heard about, made them realize that the government was being selective. Students felt these three students could in no way represent the majority of students in high schools or postsecondary institutions. How could they if none of the students knew about these meetings to provide their input? No doubt, the students and alumni felt that this was the same selective choosing of students which happens with school councils or other committees. Students and alumni wondered how the students for any of these committees were selected and by whom. They believed that "representatives of the population aren't appointed, they're elected" (urban high school student, 1999)

Even forums were viewed by students and alumni as being limited in providing the opportunities for students to be heard, unless the forum was specifically intended for students:

> But that [forums] would also have to be accompanied by a different way of getting input as well, because they're after people who don't get to speak at those forums, because there just isn't enough time, or somebody's concerns can't be fully addressed because the master of ceremonies has to move on to another subject. So there has to be . . . some person-to-person contact to bring some validity to what the Minister is saying, but also some written input to go into a think tank would give them hard evidence to look at as well as some stuff, some personal evidence. (urban high school student, 1999)

However, teachers noted that there are difficulties planning something for all students to be involved when some students do not care or desire to be involved in changing curriculum or policy. For this reason and others, it was also important to teachers that a great deal of information be acquired from many different students in different schools, such as urban, rural, outreach or charter, rather than a limited, selected few students. Challenges vary with the diversity of students and other factors. Teachers thought that the maturity level of students and their limited frame of reference or experiences also needed to be considered.

The outreach school teachers pointed out that the government needed to know how to work outside the traditional paradigm and accept alternative education programs and schools if education reform is going to work. They felt government needed to reach out to alternative programs to reach the kids who come from every walk of life. This group is expanding in society. Teachers believed that youth who have questioned mainstream life and schooling should be asked about their opinions. They are very powerful spokespeople in terms of their own learning about mainstream culture and their own life experiences. Teachers were aware that mainstream schooling did not view alternative schooling as equal; alternative schooling has been accused of having less rigor than mainstream schooling. This, however, teachers felt was all the more reason for including the students and teachers from these schools in curriculum discussions. These students and teachers were a part of society too and will contribute in one way or another.

The one challenge identified by parents for student involvement was that students may not always know what they need to focus on in school, even with careers or other things discussed in the CALM curriculum. But parents also suggested that Alberta Education and school administrators need to engage in dialogue with students, talking to them about what it is that they see as important in their Program of Studies and what is of value in their lives, and then go from there. Students should be involved in understanding the process around examinations, designing curriculum, and other activities. Alberta Education needs to help students, parents, and teachers value the process of education design and reflective thinking. It is a worthwhile process to have students involved so that they value what educators do in relation to education and what each stakeholder brings to that process:

> But look at all the learning that's going to take place in that whole process of having someone invite you to attend a meeting, where you're going to have a voice in curriculum design and policy decision and reform. And I would feel so valued; no matter what type of student I was, I think I would tend to feel valued in that process, that someone was interested enough in me to ask me my opinion and to ask me to be part of the process. And I think it's encouraging for the students. I think that what happens is, they also go back to their community a little more informed about what it is that's happening in that process, so it isn't just, "Oh, look what the teachers are doing to us," or the administrators; but it's, "Look what I'm involved in , and look at the implications this will have for me and you if you're my peers. (parent, 1999)

Communication

However, students said that before they could talk about their courses or take part in curriculum or policy reviews, they needed to know that the reviews are happening, and when. Communication regarding curriculum and policy reviews was considered to be important to inform students and others and to have them involved. For example, with CALM, the students and alumni all said that they had not heard or had not been told that CALM was under review until they learned about it through this study. It was not until this study that the students or alumni knew that there were three students representing them on Alberta Education Committees:

> I think we're finding more and more about things that exist but that aren't used because no one knows about them. . . . I think a lot of things with our education are hidden, and we're never supposed to know about it—so it seems. . . . Maybe not necessarily hidden, but they just aren't advertised. They don't make an effort to come forward about it. (urban high school student, 1999)

In addition, teachers felt that if it was decided that students would not be part of the provincial-level decision-making process, they should still receive feedback about what is going on in education reform. Discussions and feedback from various committees, surveys, and meetings should be available in written format as well as talked about at face-to-face sessions with students and other stakeholders. Teachers said that they are often not informed about what is going on either. But it was felt that the process of curriculum and policy review and how decisions are made at the provincial and local levels need to be made very clear to students. They may not always get their way, but they need to be heard.

Parents indicated that although it would be difficult to get everyone to the table, including students, an open invitation with some incentive would bring many interested stakeholders together. Without an invitation to all students or school councils, no one will know what is going on:

> That's what it takes: It takes an invitation. It takes informing me of your process. It takes a willingness on your part to negotiate time frames. . . . I would be certainly willing to engage in lots of those processes as long as I feel that I'm really going to be involved in the process. So invite me. You can certainly approach the parents' groups that are involved in a lot of the school activities. We've thrust a tremendous amount on parents in fund raising in relation to educational activities. . . . And yes, I bet parents have lots to say about their involvement in the curriculum, curriculum design, and so too would their children have those opinions. And I think there are people out there willing to be involved. (rural parent, 1999)

In addition, if Alberta Education or government is encouraging students and parents to become involved at the school level first, then they need to know what is going on:

> But do you start by just having every high school give out these applications [invitations] and see if some children want to apply to do it or something, for students? Parents? Do you hit all of our parent councils in Alberta and send letters to every parent council—or it's called now school councils, whichever—and hit and say, "We'd like people to sit with us"? And maybe there would be some parents on those councils in Alberta that would come forward and sit; maybe they could do it in smaller groups just so you don't have to pay for all that cost to come to one place together. . . . You have to start at the school and then work out from the school and try to get them involved in the school, because if you don't get them involved in the school, there's no way the big guy is going to give you—that it's going to go any further, no. And somehow they have to get those doors open and just keep on inviting. (rural parent, 1999)

Invitations need to be extended directly to students, and not necessarily through teachers, who select students. It is often the teacher's choice as to who goes to a meeting, but teachers are also one of the roadblocks in the system. For example, students with lower averages want to have a voice but have not been given one. Avenues for bringing their voices to the table have not been effective. Possibilities of reaching students include direct invitations or visits with them:

> Oh, I think it's our invitation, our openness, our attentiveness to those individuals, and what might be some of the roadblocks to them in the system. I think a lot of those individuals would probably be identified by your educators. And I think a lot of those individuals are willing to have a voice. I don't know if they've been given the *opportunity* to have a voice, or I don't know if our avenues of bringing their voice to the table have been as effective as they could be. And so I don't think that they're opting out or that they don't want to be heard. I think maybe we just have to find ways to make them heard. . . . Or it could come from Students' Council, that we're seeking representatives. It can come from a variety of forums. Sometimes we look at each other as adversaries in that whole educational process, especially in the high school, and teachers aren't always seen as being on the same—the playing field isn't level. And so I think that maybe those individuals would have to come from different areas. (rural parent, 1999)

Health professionals generally believed that it was important to approach students for their opinions rather than give them adult opinions or direct them to accept things as they are. The outcomes for students would be better if they were approached for their opinions on how things would work best for them:

> The perception of the students is paramount of what they need, and they will know better what their needs are than what we always think we know what their needs are. But I think they are able to tell you what their needs are, and then I think you can fashion what you need around them. (health professional, 1999)

Students' feedback would need to be obtained in different ways, such as through interactive discussions or questionnaires. In fact, the health professionals were the only group who really identified the students' comfort with their peers and the importance of this peer relationship and representation. CALM was a course that lent itself well to the peer education process. Evaluation and curriculum reviews would probably also benefit from peer involvement. Students have told health professionals that they would like to become more involved in curriculum development, such as that of CALM. "The opportunity exists for having these students more involved; it's just a matter of helping it to happen."

Health professionals said that Alberta Education has to be open and willing to listen to students and to talk with them informally as well as in focus groups. There are also questionnaires or technology such as computer communication and interaction which could be used to obtain information, but health professionals thought it would be better for everyone to meet face to face to hear each other's ideas and build on that. However, as one health professional (1999) stated, "Government and education people don't really want to listen or perhaps aren't as willing to." Students should be invited as people with very valuable things to bring to the table and should be seen as equal partners. After all, students are the ones living their lives through courses such as CALM:

> They're the ones who can bring the real essence of what it is like being a teen in the new millenium and what their pressures are and how they would like to see it [CALM] taught, and what would be meaningful for them. (health professional, 1999)

Students at the alternative schools are rarely invited to participate in committees or focus groups, yet they have some unique circumstances to present that could affect curriculum and policy. Although it is optional to have them involved, these students still need to connect with health professionals and teachers for support and to convey their views, experiences, and suggestions for education reform.

These suggestions, health professionals believed, should be shared and discussed openly with other stakeholders, including students. Discussions need to be in the language of students to ensure understanding of what is being proposed and why. There should be no hidden agendas for meetings or decisions set by Alberta Education and government. Government has the capacity to call discussions in any format it wishes and with any stakeholders requested. Open, publicly announced communications about education reform for curriculum and policies are essential for interested stakeholders to become involved and to encourage input from others who are otherwise marginalized, such as students, or what could happen is that Alberta Education and government will be viewed as providing lip service to the consultation process:

> If they [Alberta Education] are going to start using the words *community consultation* or *consultation*, be very clear on what that means and exactly how that feedback will be used, and what stake do I have in it? What's my agenda as a health person? And make sure that's clear when I'm asked to come and participate, or whoever is asked to participate. (health professional, 1999).

Summary of Chapter: Possibilities or Alternatives

Stakeholders said that government needs to accept the fact that there are problems with CALM and the education system. Alberta Education cannot and should not make changes alone; consultation in various ways with stakeholders including students would be needed. Suggestions included involving students and others through questionnaires, surveys, using the Internet web page, piloting of courses, course evaluations, focus groups at different levels, and others, including even visiting schools and talking informally about courses such as CALM.

All levels of students from public, private, and alternative schools, as well as those students who have dropped out of the system, and graduates, need to be consulted for their opinions. Top academic students should not always be the ones representing all other students. This is perceived as either the teacher's or administrator's bias and did not paint a true picture for students.

Although decision makers indicated that there is no reason why students could not be invited as needed for discussions with the Minister of Education or on committees, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals all said that better communication was required about what was happening with curriculum and policies and when. Open invitations needed to be extended to all stakeholders, including students. Students' input needs to be valued, as well as that of other stakeholders. The problem is that none of the stakeholders seemed to know what was going on either and felt that they should if their input was valued. All the stakeholders observed that Alberta Education usually paid lip service to some of their professed policies, such as student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform. The need for change if education reform is to be relevant and accepted by those with vested interests in education appeared to be the view of all the stakeholders interviewed. In short, students should be involved openly and in different ways in curriculum and related policy reviews. Alberta Education declared that it can do this; stakeholders want to see it in action.

Knowing what the understandings were from participants, suggests there are many possibilities and alternatives to the discourses and practices for making curriculum and policy reform processes more open to stakeholders, and for involving stakeholders in these processes. There are limitations and challenges. These categories and conclusions set the stage for the discussion which follows on the "Micro and Macro Considerations."

CHAPTER 8

THE MICRO AND MACRO CONSIDERATIONS: RELEVANCE IN THE LARGER EDUCATION AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

> Politics Given a High School Spin: Youth Parliament
> Gives Students Taste of Life in the Legislature
>
> The youth parliament was sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion and co-ordinated by the office of legislature Speaker Ken Kowalski. The idea was to show students the legislative process and MLAs' work. Organizers, including teachers, tried to make the parliament as realistic as possible. The students met at the legislature Thursday [April 13, 2000] and were briefed about the political process by cabinet members, other MLAs and reporters. They were assigned to the caucuses of three fictional parties—Referendum, Rupertland Municipal and United Rural—and were up late preparing for Friday's legislative session. Members of the Referendum party took the stance of supporting free enterprise. The Municipal favored a social safety net and the Rural was free enterprise but biased against big business. . . . Even so, students managed to raise questions on real-life issues such as Bill 11, school funding, tuition fees and even the "*Rupertland Herald*" strike. . . . "It was the best way to highlight an aspect of the parliamentary system that people in Alberta don't get to see," Garrison said. The focus was on the need for parties to co-operate so the government could function. In last year's youth parliament, a non-confidence motion brought down the government. This time, there was no such vote, although the opposition parties united in defeating Referendum's Bill 1, the Unrestricted Wages Act. The bill, to end the minimum wage, was unpopular even among students on the government side of the house. (Thorne, 2000, p. B1)

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides some of the micro and macro considerations in program and policy analysis and reform. The micro considerations were those subjective and objective interpretations of stakeholders—either individuals or interest groups—based on their political interpretations, values, experiences, issues, and interests regarding the processes and outcomes related to program and policy development and reform. The macro considerations were all the structural and positional power influences (government at the top and students at the bottom of the pyramid or hierarchical structure), and environmental aspects (institutional, physical, social, economic, and political) which linked with the bigger picture of decision making concerning education program and policy development and reform. Both the micro and macro considerations can influence the overall government versus public or societal relations regarding the outcomes of any decision-making processes involving education programs and policies. The micro and macro considerations are really the underpinnings and influencing factors which often affect why and how decisions are made for all public programs and policies. These considerations are an addition to those identified in Chapters 4 to 7.

These micro and macro considerations form the fourth construct in the program and policy archeological analysis process, and are considered to be the "deepest" layer in terms of access or interpretation. Although the categories in this construct are critical to explore to provide a richer understanding of the processes and the decisions made as part of program and policy analysis, they can often lead to potential criticism or blame of government and departments in their application of decision-making power for public programs and policies. Education programs and policies are no exception.

The following understandings were derived from the interviews, focus groups, and documents concerning micro and macro considerations:

- Alberta Education emphasized the decentralized approach they have taken to student involvement.
- Student voice gets lost at the provincial level, and therefore should stay at the local level.
- Students have different avenues available to express concerns about curriculum and policy.
- Other stakeholders including institutions and organizations are listened to and provided venues for input and involvement.
- Students should be involved in the CALM review process because of effects and outcomes.
- There are benefits to student involvement.
- There are many other influencing factors to consider when making decisions about education reform, including the media.
- Relationship between government and stakeholders such as students is distant and reserved.
- Documents indicated that more regulations and policy changes or additions have been required to accommodate changes in education over past decade.
- Recommendations focus on the need for Alberta Education to reinforce a consultation process, to support the Program of Studies mandate, to re-establish trust with the public, and to endeavor to have more students involved.

The following sections provide the participant data reviews which discuss the above conclusions. A separate section exists for a summary of various government and other documents.

Macro Considerations

There are three major areas of discussion under macro considerations: "Provincial Level Dynamics," "Influence of Other Institutions and Groups," and "Other Influencing Factors." These three sections contain the various participant responses as categorized.

Provincial Level Dynamics

The reason given by decision makers for decentralizing student involvement to the school level was that students' concerns often get lost at the provincial level. Their impact and ownership of curriculum and policies are far less at the provincial level than at the local level. In fact, the involvement of students at the provincial level has mostly been indirect through their teachers, who would have had discussions with their students about the curriculum. This has changed a bit over the years with students being asked for input on surveys or in focus groups. "I would say in program development we have a much broader consultation now than we have had in the 1980s. However, we have not targeted that specifically at students, but it's a much more open process" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). But the overall picture presented by most decision makers is one in which Alberta Education has not done as much as needed in terms of determining long-term quality assurance processes and looking at the impact of the curriculum and policies as well as the impact of stakeholder involvement such as parents or students. It is possible that student participation in regulations and policy reviews affects the ownership of those regulations and policies.

However, from the decision makers' perspectives, it was difficult, and virtually impossible, to get outreach students to come forward as individuals because they already feel marginalized. These students are not perceived as equal to other public or separate school students. Unless they are represented through other groups such as teachers, school councils, or school boards, outreach students are not represented on the Program Assessment Advisory Committee or elsewhere. It is difficult to get students in regular public and separate schools to participate in discussing curriculum and policy, and much more difficult to involve marginalized students.

On the other hand, it was also pointed out that if students are needed for consultation or to be present on regulatory or advisory committees, they will be brought in, or a program manager from Alberta Education will go out to the schools to seek input from students and others, as needed. Alberta Education goes to students as required, and the Minister has the right to also canvass students for curriculum or policy reform processes at any time. Although some pressure can also be put on the Education Department Regulatory Committee to include students, parents, and others, the committee cannot be directed to do so. If however, the committee's view is not comprehensive enough, then a repeated review can be requested, and students' input may be the instigating reason for the repeat review:

> Student involvement is important, but you can understand that from a practical point of view, it would be impossible to canvass 50,000 Grade 12s as to what they thought should be part of their Program of Studies, so there will always be thousands and thousands who are not involved in the input for changes. (decision maker, politician, 1998)
>
> Informally, I think that the process by which policy is developed must take into account the views of all stakeholders. That doesn't mean that we'll send out a survey to one percent of students in a particular grade. I think what that means to me is that, informally, I'll be happy to meet with students, with parents, with teachers, and with school administrators, with trustees, and get their input on a less formal basis; as I said, a peripatetic basis. And that in my mind satisfies the need for input. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

There has in the past decade been less need for provincial consultation because of the decentralization of responsibilities to local school districts. Much less flexibility exists with a centralized decision-making system. Even the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Government, 1985) has undergone revision with new graduation requirements introduced in 1994. There is no policy statement now; it has instead been replaced by business plans which contain goals, strategies, and actions related to carrying out activities and learner outcomes. "We [Alberta Education] steer instead of row, and we set the direction . . . and learner outcomes" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). The choices for many other things will be in local decision making under section 44 of the School Act, involving community, students, school councils, and school boards. Alberta Education and the Minister will make the final decision about what the curriculum and policies will look like regardless of stakeholder input.

Another decision maker (1998) from Alberta Education stated that until students are thought of as partners, they will not be involved: "Politics is the allocation of human value, and education is very much tied up with human value."

> I define the purpose of my job by the needs of students, and every policy decision we make, every curriculum change we make, we always have to be able to answer the question, "How does this improve student learning?" And as long as the Minister of Education and the Department of Education and all the stakeholders, be they teachers, administrators, or trustees, focus on answering that question, I don't think we can go far wrong. We will always as groups have different opinions as to how we accomplish what's in the best interests of students, but I think we should always have that question mark. So my job is defined by the needs of those students. That's how I see the relationship. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

Many of the decision makers said that, ideally, Alberta Education should be at the center of the system with a malleable process to allow for people's input and free-flowing information. What affects one affects all. We need to change the old structure to this new, less-controlling one before we can change anything else:

> Again, it's sharing of information; it's being transparent; it's informing people as to the why and the limitations and that a decision had to be made, so we've gone with this because it was the best that we could do at three o'clock on Friday. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

There are economic, social, and political influences and factors which the public does not always take into consideration. Influences from interest groups must be considered in any curriculum or policy reform equation; but final decisions are made by the Minister, and he must include all these factors and the long-term economic and sociopolitical picture.

Influence of Other Institutions and Groups

Postsecondary institutions were felt to have a great deal of autonomy in determining graduation requirements, and perhaps students needed to challenge these requirements if the impact on them was becoming unmanageable:

> I think they [students] do [have a role to play], although sometimes graduation requirements, depending on what the students want to do, it's sometimes out of the control strictly of the Department of Education. For example, universities will have certain requirements for students entering. Whether those requirements are always valid or not, I think, is something that students ought to challenge from time to time. Certainly, *I* challenge them. There's a great deal of autonomy within postsecondary institutions that sometimes compels students to take courses that they wouldn't ordinarily take and perhaps wouldn't even *require* for the Program of Studies, that they would choose to go through in postsecondary, but it's a requirement of the university or postsecondary institution, and that sometimes takes away the flexibility of students too in the courses that they would ordinarily like as opposed to those that they *must* take. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

One decision maker, also a politician (1998), felt that institutions could look after their own interests quite well, but instead

> we are short-changing the parents' view. I'm not sure where the government inherited the right to dictate what should be education or what should be in the best interests of everybody. As a government we still, hopefully, work for the people, and that's mostly the parents.

Many decision makers felt that the taxpayers, including parents, should have a voice in what they think is needed in the school and education system. However, parent representation through Parent School Councils was also mentioned as an increasingly powerful vehicle for parents as well as students to be heard. One decision maker felt that the power of the school boards was being reduced and the Parent School Councils were becoming more powerful because they are more numerous and can express their concerns to the politicians: "I think eventually, the school councils [will] . . . be causing as many, I wouldn't say problems, but they'll express their wishes to the politicians, and they'll probably be more powerful than school boards because they're more numerous" (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

It was also mentioned that business is often listened to by government and influences issues. It was suggested that MLA business involvement was one of the main driving forces for the CALM review, which is a different reason from the one provided earlier; that is, that students' concerns precipitated the CALM review:

> When the MLA business involvement stuff came there was this whole section on career development, and career development is definitely part of the CALM program, so there's a real tie-in there. And I believe maybe that's one of the early drivers for the CALM review, actually. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

Other Influencing Factors

When the decision makers were asked what they thought were other influences or influential factors for achieving the outcomes of curriculum and policy reform, they suggested many, including the following:

1. There is a circular pattern of influence between several major stakeholders in curriculum and policy implementation and reform. Alberta Education provides the Program of Studies which all schools must follow. Teachers have the most impact on the Program of Studies through their teaching strategies and delivery as well as evaluation or feedback from students. Course reputation and student learning are affected by teachers. Students, in the end, can influence parents and others about the relevance and purpose of courses such as CALM, and their feedback comes back to Alberta Education through various sources. Students are no longer passive recipients of curriculum; pressure is on the students to complete the core curriculum, including CALM, in order to graduate and to be successful at career choices such as those provided at postsecondary institutions. Students are beginning to challenge the system. Students have a great deal of impact on what happens in the classroom, particularly with teachers who are conscious of achievement results and consequences with student behavior in the classroom. "They [students] just control the whole bloody room; teachers don't do that any more, can't do that any more" (former decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). And parents may have concerns about aspects of the curriculum, but this does not mean that things get unplugged. Final decisions about what stays in or is deleted from the curriculum are made by a few decision

makers who have no background in education or health necessarily and "who are making decisions totally from the hip in terms of where they see the values and what they think" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

2. CALM is like a Pandora's Box, complete with issues, values, different stakeholders, populist movement ideas, accountability needs, and other 'surprises' or elements. For teachers there is no university training or in-services for CALM. This has been perceived by some as a major barrier to the effective implementation of CALM. Consultants to teachers in school districts were also cut—probably a budget-related decision. Decision makers pointed out that the focus on input from students should be on the curriculum delivery and strategies used by teachers. There needs to be more attention paid to how students learn. And students should be evaluating curriculum and delivery approaches. But CALM has not had a measuring stick or diploma examination, which consequently presents with the challenge of why it is a core course required for graduation. There is no proof that teaching some of the values or soft skills, as in the CALM course, would make any observable differences in students now or in the future; these types of courses are difficult to measure. Unless there is some hard evidence, "the nay sayers will certainly have an argument that no one can really easily put down" (decision maker, curriculum consultant, 1998). However, if CALM had been eliminated, what is there to replace it? There would be obvious gaps in health and social topics. CALM has been the course addressing many of society's issues with students. In fact, the school and community environments have played a big role in determining some very real learning situations and outcomes, such as safe and caring schools, employment, social determinants, violence, sexual assault, and others. A vision and discussion of a comprehensive school health policy and program is in the near future.

3. "There is a bureaucratic process, but there's a political process that occurs at the same time." Such opinions came from bureaucrats, politicians, and stakeholders. There may be conflicts which need to be resolved, such as "Who should determine what goes into the curriculum? Is it parents, students, teachers, society, universities, Alberta Education, or the Minister?" It has already been said that postsecondary institutions have a great deal of autonomy in influencing decisions about the graduation requirements for high school students. It has also been said that individuals, including students, seniors, the unemployed, and those who do not count basically in terms of their contributions to society, would not be invited or respected for their contributions. However, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms still has some impact on individuals and their struggles with the realities in society. This in turn definitely affects our education, curriculum, and courses such as CALM. Students have the right to the best education possible, but also to reflect on contributing back to society after high school. There has been a lot

of pressure by parents to move education into certain directions. As one politician (1998) stated, "I think sometimes it's more pressure from the parents that the kids have to go to university or college than it is from the system itself." As well, with parents' complaints being left unheard by the bureaucracy in Alberta Education, more parents are turning to home schooling or charter and private schools, which are now receiving some government funding. There is a message in this: "The reason they're there is because the public system had let them down in some way or another" (decision maker, politician, 1998). And although there is a perception that most people are complacent or do not want to take a stand, some are changing the way in which education is being delivered. Challenges are being made to the conventional notions of schools and education, and politicians sense a discontent with education by the public. "The political landscape also influences political pressure that's put on the [Alberta Education] department" (decision maker, consultant, 1998). The department, in turn, responds to options by saying that the option chosen must be affordable in the fiscal context of the government. Economics, no doubt, plays a major role in the decision for education reform by politicians and bureaucrats.

4. The media may or may not influence the public's perspectives on education. Populist movements are media driven, which is the negative side to influential factors in curriculum and policy development and reform:

> We've gone to definitely the current societal concerns. . . . There's always been a future orientation and always predicting, trying to predict what's going to be out there, what the people will need. I don't think that's changed over the years. . . . I think sometimes we pay too much attention to populist movements that are in the media, and they're media driven. That's the negative side. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)
>
> So the Minister of Education has a difficult job of trying to balance the need for public accountability with the need for a curriculum that develops soft skills that are not as easily measurable. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

Micro Considerations

Under micro considerations, there are two main areas identified from the data and the categories: "Student Initiation of Reform: Avenues Available," and "Outcomes and Benefits of Student Involvement."

Student Initiation of Reform: Avenues Available

Decision makers said that students can initiate curriculum and policy reviews whenever they think it is necessary. More specifically, they said that students have more opportunities for input into curriculum and policy at the local level where their impact is felt because of how they view the relevancy and purpose of their education. Decision makers emphasized the significance of this decentralized approach for student input and involvement because courses could be made more relevant through students' evaluation of their delivery. Therefore, students' input was still felt to be stronger in the classroom than at the provincial level with Alberta Education or the Minister. A former bureaucrat (1999) indicated that

> the research shows that with involvement, the learning and relevancy goes up. Again, I think if that's made explicit to students, if that's what they're engaging in and they have that kind of say, that probably would result in them saying that the curriculum is more relevant. I think again you have to consider what they're able to give feedback on, and a lot of it too, I think comes down to the delivery.

This was supported by another retired bureaucrat, who also suggested that any time that people are allowed to participate in the development of something, they will perform better. He also said that the research is not clear as to whether student involvement makes a difference or whether someone who makes a good sales pitch to students to buy into it does. Another decision maker refuted the former claims and suggested that intuitively there might be a correlation between student involvement in processes and perceived value or purpose, but this cannot be concluded because not *all students* as a whole would be involved in a review of curriculum and policy. The number of students canvassed would be limited and would not reflect the majority of students' opinions or views.

Most Alberta Education decision makers were not convinced that students were serious about becoming involved in curriculum and policy decision making at the provincial level. The question was, "How serious are students about getting involved to discuss or be involved in reviewing their curriculum and those policies which affect them?" If students are concerned, decision makers from Alberta Education felt that they needed to go directly to their school councils, principals, and school boards rather than coming to Alberta Education.

The fact that legislation states that students are to be part of the school council may or may not make them feel a higher level of ownership with regards to education legislation. For many students this opportunity gives them a choice, but many students unfortunately either do not care or choose not to participate. Consequently, very few changes are made to curriculum and policies based on student feedback, and there is no guarantee that programs would work better for students. "Do we go back to the feedback group and say, 'As a result of your comments, we made these changes?' . . . Would you see programs that work better for students? I don't know" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998).

Outcomes and Benefits of Student Involvement

Some decision makers commented that experience suggests to them that with greater student involvement, we would not have a more flexible or relevant curriculum:

> Do we really know how that purpose and relevancy are linked with student participation? No, I don't think we really know that, because I don't think we've involved them extensively enough to really know what the outcomes would be, and I can only guess and say I'm not convinced that greater involvement of the student would lead to increased relevancy of curriculum or increased flexibility of curriculum or so on. I think that's an incorrect perception that some people hold. My experience, limited as it is, doesn't suggest to me that we would have a more flexible or relevant curriculum result from greater involvement of students. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

As well, there is more of a tendency to get academic students responding, which would make the curriculum less flexible for the average student and, in fact, favor the interests of postsecondary institutions such as universities.

Students were also asked about their perceptions concerning student involvement in curriculum and policy processes and what relationship or connection this has to the purpose, relevancy, and successful outcomes. There were different understandings from the different groups of students. Generally, the urban high school students felt content to see a few changes made with CALM itself, but to leave everything else as it is. They felt that the purpose of education was to prepare individuals for careers and the work force, which they believed was happening. Urban students were the most content with the education system; they did not want to have yet another thing to worry about, although one student said that he would like involvement in curriculum and policy review processes when they happened, as with CALM, for example. All these same urban students felt that it was important for government and Alberta Education to hear what students had to say even though they felt that government would probably come back and tell them what was going to happen regardless of students' or others' input:

> I like it how it is now. I think it'd be too complicated if we have a choice, because there's already so much stuff; we're all so busy. If we had to choose how the curriculum is going to be, that's one other thing on our heads. (high school student, urban, 1999)

> I think I'm pretty content. Maybe even I could have a small involvement in what's taught here, but pretty well, I'm content with it. (high school student, urban, 1999)

For some urban high school students, the Challenge Program (introductory Bachelor-level courses which students can take as part of their advanced curriculum) offered them more opportunities to discuss controversial things. They were less restricted in terms of criticizing their course content because they were encouraged to think more critically.

Unlike these urban students, rural high school students felt that there was a direct link for them between being involved in curriculum and policy and the challenges they face with courses and course delivery. They wanted more involvement in the curriculum and policy review processes. These students also felt that they wanted to graduate, but not necessarily to do so if they had not learned the material well:

> We're the ones who are learning the material, so I think we should have input as to what we learn. We're the ones who have to take it with us, and if we're having troubles learning it, and the teachers can't explain it to us except to follow this certain curriculum, then we're basically messed with going on to the next grade. (high school student, rural, 1999)

Outreach students felt that students should be able to negotiate their graduation requirements somewhat. If CALM is going to be mandatory, it should be made relevant and credible.

The alumni students felt that there had to be a more balanced approach to curriculum and policy review processes, which needed to involve others along with students. Students tend to look at things from their point of view as learners, and not from others' points of views. Students may have a difficult time deciding what the curriculum or graduation policy should look like because they lack experience. But students do have things to say which are relevant to their learning and the curriculum. Therefore, students felt that they needed to be included in the discussions about what the curriculum would look like and the value of the courses for real-life situations. However, students also felt that they needed input from parents, teachers, and others to learn about the value of courses for real life.

If students have to take the courses they do, then these courses should have some use or purpose, and students can provide feedback as to what they think. However, their feedback may not be as significant while they are still in high school. In high school, students have so little time to learn things properly, and they like to learn things that are cool or immediately helpful to them. But students should not have to learn the hard way either: "There's so much better ways to learn than finding out through negative consequences" (alumnus, 1999). Because students are a captive audience every day, they can be taught what is relevant and purposeful. They can also learn to be critical about what they took after they take it, and particularly after they graduate. Maturity levels of students is an important consideration when talking about the design of curriculum and policy and their relevance or purpose. If students find their courses worthwhile, the material will be relevant, and only they can say this for sure. For CALM specifically, students can comment on its relevance and purpose and help in the course revision. The successful outcome for curriculum and policy review is dependent as much on the learners (current and past), as it is on the teachers or the curriculum and policy decision makers. However, it was clear from the discussions that student involvement in actual curriculum and policy development and reform processes is really indirect and, in reality, will have no impact on the purpose or relevancy of education or on the final curriculum and policy developed.

Many teachers felt that with courses such as CALM, the students will often make the connection to relevance themselves as they become involved in the curriculum, receive some direction, and begin to look at their own reality. "Kids don't see necessarily what's going to hit them either, blindside them, because as adults you know from your own learning that there were things that you really wished you'd have known before you went out" (teacher, rural high school, 1999). Students have questioned CALM because they don't see the relevance; the course needs to change, hence the review. Teachers felt that students should perhaps play a more active role in the development and delivery of CALM to make it more relevant:

> The most valuable input that students that are currently in the programs might be able to provide is the delivery of it. How can it be delivered so they understand it better? What interests them? What kind of textbook, reference books? Those sorts of things I think the students definitely have as a stakeholder. Not content. . . . Actually, the way things are presented actually happen at the provincial level as well. . . . The students would be able to probably help in the area of what themes, how could you present the concepts in a more understandable way, a more interesting way. (teacher, urban high school, 1999)

Joint Macro and Micro Consideration

Three sections are jointly covered: "CALM As An Issue," "Relationship Between Government and Stakeholders," and "Recommendations." These three sections contain overlapping understandings and categories which are difficult to separate, and are therefore discussed jointly.

CALM and Curriculum as Issues

Some decision makers believed that as long as courses are meaningful and relevant, they should be a must for students to take. For example,

> As long as CALM is meaningful, it should be mandatory. If they don't have it mandatory, they [students] won't take it, if it's not a meaningful course. . . . But if the students find that it's not meaningful, then there's no point in having it. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

Others disagreed with this premise of having courses mandatory just to meet graduation requirements. Some decision makers felt that consensus was not always the way to go if it was not necessarily going to solve problems in the future. Therefore, although certain courses are mandatory or core to meet graduation requirements, should they be? CALM was mentioned several times in this regard, and was even felt to be a marginalized course:

> The feeling that if a course like CALM, which was dealing more with soft skills and with the things that are required to sort out your life, . . . that these courses tend to be marginalized or would be marginalized if there wasn't some reason that kids had to take it. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

And although Alberta Education or the Minister will make the final decisions about the curriculum content and graduation requirements, there needs to be input into the relevance of having courses such as CALM in the Program of Studies as a mandatory core curriculum.

Several decision makers expressed concerns about the curriculum and education meeting the needs of those who need education the most—those youth who drop out of school. Very little effort has been made to acknowledge these individuals and their views about education. Alternative schools are enrolling some of these latter students who are rarely, if ever, consulted about curriculum or policy reform. It is as if these students do not count, and yet the realization was there that these individuals will end up costing society the most in the long run:

> The ones that need the most help are the ones that are failing the system or drop out—not to say the top group, but there's some who would go and get a university degree despite what the teacher is like or what we do. They're going to make it on their own or with some help. The ones I think down the road will cause society the most are the ones that leave school early. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

For CALM specifically, most decision makers felt that it is important to do extensive consultations with many groups where there are opportunities to talk about community values. There is a tendency for committees or government to want to become social engineers and to determine the narrow bridge which youth should walk.

Both groups, the high school students and the alumni, felt that CALM has important information to offer. If this course had been eliminated from the high school curriculum, the areas or topics covered by CALM would have been lost. There was no doubt from both groups of students that CALM needs to be totally revised to reflect the needs of teenagers and young adults today. It needs to be more relevant in content and delivery. And students felt that their input would help with this process and would help Alberta Education and government make decisions about such things as teacher delivery methods and about formatting the course for a one-week intensive delivery, for example, as opposed to a full semester. Students felt that the course could be taught like a symposium so that the impact would be more likely to help students seek additional advice on their own or early counseling if needed. It would also accommodate those students who felt more comfortable about dealing with their health and social issues to focus on their other studies.

The one major problem which all students seemed to have with CALM was that if CALM was to remain mandatory, they also wanted it to be measured in the same way as other courses are. They had no problems with CALM being mandatory and, in fact, suggested that it should remain mandatory; otherwise students would not be inclined to take it. However, more important, the credibility of the course is reflected by how a course is measured in comparison to other courses. Students identified their concerns about fitting CALM into a schedule already filled with other core courses which were measured by diploma exams. To help students and others at the school level understand what is happening with CALM and other courses in the curricula, and policy changes, there needs to be ongoing communication from Alberta Education with every school:

> I don't know, in CALM or where you place it, but I think there should be somewhere—I don't know, have an assembly every week or something, and just update the students on what's happening in their education, whether or not the curriculum is being changed in something or new policies in education, and just update the students, because we really have knowledge of what is happening. So I think there should be a newsletter for parents even. If they're concerned, they want to know about what's happening in their child's education, they should be able to get a newsletter. There's the ATA newsletter, Alberta Teachers' Association; and maybe they should have one for the APA or Alberta parents. (rural high school students, 1999)

All teachers agreed that CALM should be revised. They supported the students' viewpoints that parts of CALM were beneficial but that the course needed to be made relevant to teens and to be measurable if left as mandatory or core. Because of the input provided to Alberta Education from teachers, students, and parents, it was agreed by the Minister that CALM would be reviewed and not eliminated. One urban teacher, who played a part in getting a group of individuals together to speak to the Standing Policy Committee on Education and Training, said that

> they've agreed to review it [CALM]. CALM went through a bit of a crises in that public pressure was suggesting that it shouldn't be taught at all. And this is where it comes back to the influence: Who is government listening to? And curriculum and the education system becomes political at a certain point, and there was a move afoot by a certain segment of our society that said CALM shouldn't be taught in schools; sexuality and independent living skills, that all should be left up to families, and that we should be focusing on the core subjects. That's one perspective, but the reality is, a lot of those things are not being taught in the families. When it got out that there was political pressure to cancel CALM, there were those of us who believe in it and have seen the benefits in our students and have talked to students and have heard from them the benefits; that's when we had to become active and suggest that there is another side to

> this story. So, apparently, as a result of that, CALM has been approved to be revised. It'll be interesting to see what the format's going to be; it'll be interesting to see if they include students, and hopefully students who have been through the curriculum. . . . Hopefully, they will have student groups and parents and so on. (teacher, urban high school, 1999)

One outreach teacher felt that the removal of a course such as CALM would not make any difference in society. The major conflict is with other academic courses which are needed more than CALM:

> They have to really look at the benefits of this course, especially CALM. What are the benefits for the students? Is there a real benefit? Is there a real impact? I would have to question that again; I don't think there is. . . . The academic courses, yes, you have to have some in the curriculum. Hopefully, they're meeting the standards that the universities want. (teacher, outreach school, 1999)

The majority of the public health nurses involved in this discussion supported the need for CALM. Only one nurse felt that too much emphasis had been placed on CALM and that the components of CALM should be distributed through other courses and school living throughout the year.

Relationship Between Government and Stakeholders

There were some differences of opinion among the decision makers as to their perceptions about the relationship which exists between government and stakeholders such as students. They also provided different suggestions or recommendations on how communications could be improved between government and the public.

The majority of decision makers felt that Alberta Education fits the 'black box' concept, which is the model describing the government as existing within its own secure and sheltered institution or 'box' and without the constant input and feedback from public or other groups to necessarily influence the decisions made in the end. The black box implies that government exists in the dark most of the time, impervious to what is really happening outside. The decision makers admitted that government fits this model because it has said, "We want your [the people's] input," and then what really happens is a type of lip service, or what people see is anything but what their input reflected. People want and need to know what decisions are made and why. What is the justification for the decisions made? And certainly many decision makers were skeptical that students or the public would be aware that government reviews and revises regulations and policies on a regular basis. It was assumed that students should know about government functions as a result of the social studies curriculum, but that they might not understand the processes involved in government. The decision maker who said this also said that he could not see how

Alberta Education could bridge the distance with students in particular, or what would be gained in doing so. There is no direct connection to students from government, nor to teachers or parents. The latter group, however, as taxpayers and as linked to school councils may have more of a connection. The decision maker's thoughts on government relations with the public were that, generally, "with formalization comes less flexibility." People will not call Alberta Education. It is too distant, and people do not know where it is or who it really represents. It has been easier for people to link with politicians, their MLAs, and school boards and superintendents than with Alberta Education. It seems that government and Alberta Education still have control; there is still centralized decision making and funding allocations. They are setting themselves up to be criticized and distrusted by parents and others. Participatory democracy does not exist when decisions are predetermined centrally without the benefit of the public's input. It is the old model of the hierarchy and the bureaucracy which keeps the perceptions alive that there is power and mystery within Alberta Education and the Minister's office. As mentioned, another problem is that over 95% of people do not even know where the Alberta Education office is located. How can people know to whom they are complaining? In the bureaucracies of the departments such as Education and Health, the number of people working and making decisions when they are insulated from the people is a concern:

> A lot of our departmental officials have lost touch with that part of the real world, with the people who are affected by their decisions. And I think it's all too easy to make a decision, but you don't have to look in the eyeballs of the person who's affected by it, whether it's good or bad. We need a lot of people to run that system, but it scares me that a lot of times they get into the system and never face the real world again. (decision maker, politician, 1998)

The same decision maker went on to say that decisions are still made by one person in the department, or senior people carry the decision, "and often a very significant decision can be made in ten or fifteen minutes based on the information background that you've gotten from the expert officials."

Two decision makers felt that government did not function in a "black box" but that there was a two-way flow of information, and information was shared at all levels. However, they admitted that there is a hierarchy when it comes to relationships with students. But things are changing because people's perspectives are influencing changes in policies. Interest groups are viewed as essential to generate consensus or interest in particular issues or perspectives, which is viewed as an important aspect of democracy. "Democracy says we all elect our level of participation, and some of and, in fact, a great deal of responsibility rests on us as individuals" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). Government has become more sensitive to students, particularly regarding achievements and emphasis on the lives of children affected by poverty, hunger, lack of shelter or family support, and other issues. Government is listening to students, but "decision making is not easy." The relationship is changing: with the secondary school review in 1990, students were more involved, while prior to this teachers had made all the decisions for students. Everyone in government and Alberta Education is working towards the betterment of education and "are doing things that they feel is right for students, and right for students within reason" (decision maker, politician, 1998).

The high school students and alumni had a skeptical view about the existing relationship between government and students as a whole. They felt that the connection for most students or interaction with government was nonexistent. There is no bridge between government and students; neither side knows anything about the other. Government is viewed as a hierarchy or pyramid, with students at the bottom, below their parents, feeling powerless; and government, of course, is at the top. Communication is very much top down; students have the least say about anything:

> I'm sure it's more [equal] if we were on a little more equal footing, but unfortunately, it doesn't feel like that ever. But the more I learn, the more it's kind of like a teeter-totter, that the government is sort of on one side and the rest of us are sort of on the other, and we have the power to up ourselves. And I guess students need to know that they've got that kind of power too, that just because you're a student doesn't mean that you don't have a say. Unfortunately, I think we're kind of conditioned to look at it as one of hierarchy, though. (alumnus, 1999)

When asked what their perceptions were of the relationship between students and government regarding curriculum and policy decisions, teachers said that if their relationship with government was weak and questionable, then any relationship between government and students would probably be nonexistent. First, students are a long way removed from the government or decision makers to assist with curriculum and policy development and reform processes. Second, government does not always respect the opinions of students, particularly those in alternative school programs which are viewed as not equal to traditional school programs:

> The kids pick up on that as well. I think sometimes they're far more sensitive than adults and they know when something's not respected. They don't feel respected, and so they're not going to give respect back, and really, nor should they. (teacher, outreach school, 1999)

Third, schools, including teachers and students, have not been approached or asked to participate in curriculum reviews such as that of CALM. Government and Alberta Education are the big players: "They always talk about their stakeholders and whatever, but generally the stakeholders are business, government departments, that kind of thing" (teacher, rural high school, 1999).

The parents focused on two topics throughout the discussions of micro and macro considerations. These two themes were *consultation* and *communication*. They indicated that their concerns were being listened to and consulted by government. Government has a lot of authority and makes many decisions without the stakeholders having any input. Government is very distanced from students and parents and does not understand the full impact or consequences of some of their decisions on students and parents. As well, government needs to be accountable to parents, who are also taxpayers, and some of whom are also experts in the area of education. Other stakeholders, such as teachers and students, also need to be involved and consulted:

> So if you're going to ask people to engage in this process of decision making and discussions about the curriculum and reforming and everything, then don't at the end of it end up coming up with the decisions that you wanted to be made in the first place, and you went through the whole façade of having discussions, etc., but only to make sure that people arrived at the same answers you wanted. And if you're still going to act on your own answers, then don't ask the questions to the other people. (parent, rural, 1999)

Government should be striving to work with parents and other stakeholders to help them build capacities to ensure that schools and communities work together in ensuring that Alberta has the best education system in Canada:

> I'd like to see us focus on building capacities in the various stakeholders. . . . It's empowering the citizens in our nation; it's going to make them more informed parents about how you can be involved about what I did as a student, what I hope for my children, and the change that comes as a result of that. (parent, rural, 1999)

However, the health professionals also indicated that although they know that the students are not being heard by government, these professionals felt powerless to do anything. They felt caught in the middle, knowing what the students' issues are but not being able to do anything about them: "It seems our hands are tied as health professionals, in the field, because we have to take our directions from our leaders, from our consultants, and it seems that every year there's a different direction" (health professional, 1998). They saw their advocacy range as not as far as government, and were aware that CALM and community health are viewed as "fluff" because they are difficult to measure, which in turn means that support will be less. Government has been accused of paying "lip service," particularly to prevention and health promotion. The support is not there for these types of programs.

In addition, health professionals believed that the relationship between students and government is nonexistent or "far removed." The appearance is that there is consultation, but there really has not been any; the majority of schools have not been consulted. Students do not feel that they can contribute anything; they are not sure who Alberta Education is or who to contact:

> There is a sense, I think, that government and education people don't really want to listen or perhaps aren't willing to, and that's just a sense I get, and I can't really even say I've had any specific examples I can give. But in order for people to feel that they are heard, I think they need to have opportunity or need to see that Alberta Education is open and is willing to listen to them and willing to talk, whether it is informal discussion groups or whatever format or process they use. But it's that willingness to listen, I think, that needs to be heard, that attitude that "We're all in this together, and your viewpoint is valuable, and we need your participation, especially with the kids, to be able to nail down what it is they need from us." And I'm not sure that openness is there now. (health professional, 1998)

It appears that the education system operates separately from the rest of society. Things are politically driven, even at summits, where information is given but very little sought. If consultation has occurred, there are no supporting documents. The belief is that government does not "walk the talk" and that the consultation process is really a sham and that those who are at the consultation table are not necessarily the ones who can advocate for the issues. Government needs to reach the majority of students, not just a few, and they need to balance the opinions with facts. Government has been accused of being voice selective, hearing only those it wants to hear:

> I would feel a concern that there really isn't a dialogue there [between government and students or stakeholders]; I feel very much it's a done deal. I personally feel the government makes an impression of consulting, but I don't think they consult. In the round table talks with health, they went around; it was very superficial. When they've had the summits it's the same thing. They kind of present what they're doing, but they're not really looking for input. So I really feel that a lot of things are politically driven. They look at what is going to give them the most votes and the least reaction, and that's what they tend to go with. (health professional, 1999)

Recommendations

Recommendations from decision makers for change included:

- Alberta Education needs to listen to students and establish provincial achievements for CALM to make it credible.
- Alberta Education needs to reinforce consultations as part of the curriculum and policy reviews, but this is not the end-all. Ongoing communication links must be maintained to explain what happens with consultation results. Students and other stakeholders should be consulted, and communication should be ongoing. Alberta Education needs to get outside the box to realize that it cannot please everyone but that it owes an explanation as to why decisions are made the way they are: "Alberta Education should keep a finger on the

pulse of the schools. That would be very comfortable, rather than building up a little barrier" (decision maker, education consultant, 1998).

- Alberta Education needs to be reminded of its mandate, which is to provide a Program of Studies for students which also includes delivery of services and materials to teachers so that they can deliver the curriculum to students. Alberta Education needs to be reminded that the two go hand in hand.
- Alberta Education must re-establish the trust of the public. Regular communications, regional meetings, and relationship building with stakeholders will help. Alberta Education also needs to encourage people that it is worthwhile for them to become involved with Alberta Education and government. Students need to know that their voices are heard at all levels and that they have access to all levels within Alberta Education through MLAs, Ministers, and others. The Standing Policy Committees need to find different ways to have students bring their concerns forward, and they are asking for suggestions. The government needs to be transparent, permeable, easy to reach, but it may not be possible with everyone. It is important that the people see the Minister as approachable; the collective views are important "because it affects us all" (decision maker, politician, 1998).
- Alberta Education has not yet arrived at involving students as much as it could. The relationship is an indirect one, although in some departments staff are very sympathetic to students' views: "We need to have more involvement of students in the framework and structure . . . by endeavoring to have more students on committees . . . and have a few more focus groups" (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998). Involvement should be happening at the local level where students can be actual partners. Students are not given much voice at the provincial political level:

> I'm not sure what we could do, except perhaps at the secondary level, involve them in more advisory programs in areas where they actually can make a contribution because they can see the really immediate, direct relevance to their life, in that program. (decision maker, Alberta Education, 1998)

Students felt that in order to change the negative relations between government and students, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Because students felt paralyzed to approach government directly with their concerns, they contended that government should be checking regularly with students and teachers regarding issues concerning the curriculum and graduation requirements. Government should be in the classrooms:

> I think a good idea would be—but it would have to be on the government's part *first*—I think that they should take all this into consideration, and *they* should set up some sort of thing. They should come to the schools and make themselves available to be told this stuff. Even in high school, they should be coming to the schools, come at lunch hour or something, something like they do here, be down in the cafeteria and make themselves available to this kind of stuff, so it's an actual person that you're talking to and telling, and it's not you send them a letter or something to tell them, or you sign a petition saying whatever. It would sink in more, for myself anyway, if I actually had the person to talk to and say, "This is how I feel about it." (alumnus, 1999)

- Students felt that there should be more than one high school student representative on the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC) at Alberta Education to represent the diverse views of students—urban, rural, outreach, at least. Students and alumni felt that "information is useless if it's kept under wraps." Students are not well represented with only three students sitting on PAAC making decisions for all students. Something needs to change if what these three students are deciding is for all students and their future: "Whose interests are you representing if you don't talk to people that are part of that group that you're supposed to be representing?" (alumnus, 1999).
- Students need to partner with parents and teachers and others to approach government. This could happen through existing Parent School Councils or other groups. Students also need to be more vocal to their own MLAs. However, students realized that their rights are limited, even with a vote:

> You hesitate to say anything, just your own opinion. You just feel like it's not important any more, not even ever it was. What difference does it make now? But it will in your future if you say something now. Or you still make a difference for someone else, even for your own kids. So yes, it is powerless. (alumnus, 1999)

Students felt that their input could be valuable, particularly as alumni who have life experiences to enhance their perception of the education system, curriculum, and policies. As taxpayers, they should have more to say at different levels. Communication could be as simple as "the difference between, 'Do you agree with this, yes or no?' or 'What do you think about this?'" (alumnus, 1999).

Teachers felt that the students needed flexibility, purpose, effective and direct communication, interaction, and realism, if they were going to benefit from the curriculum, including CALM. They also are misunderstood in what they want or need and are underestimated in their ability to pick out teachers who dislike teaching courses such as CALM.

Teachers themselves identified the need for in-service and dedicated time for CALM. The lack of both reflects on the quality and interest in teaching the course:

> They've thrown it [CALM] in with something else always; it's never given separate time. You did leadership and CALM; they just kind of threw it on top of your job. . . . There has to be some recognition that this is a demand on somebody's time. It's been additional time, and if it's truly to be taken seriously, it has to be developed so it's very workable and easy. (teacher, urban high school, 1999)

Rural teachers also felt that the expectations of the curriculum were too narrowly focused and needed to be more flexible for rural settings where "neat" resources were not always available or accessible.

The teachers also identified some other micro and macro changes which government or Alberta Education needs to consider if the education curriculum and policies are to be reformed successfully, not just for CALM, but also for other reviews in the future. Most suggestions are long term. First, teachers said that all stakeholders should be at the table discussing the same things or government needs to change its mindset and involve stakeholders through various means:

> If you were going to meet them [students] on their terms, you go to their turf. . . . And just because there's smokers and rabble rousers or whatever kind of label you want to stick on them doesn't mean to say that their input is any less valid than anybody else's. (teacher, rural high school, 1999)

Second, the teachers suggested that government should actually become involved in long-term research to gain a good understanding of the true benefits of the education system or parts of it. They need to have a five-year study specifically with students in high school and graduates or alumni. They need to set up surveys which are mandatory to complete, such as Revenue Canada's census surveys. Only government can do that effectively. Currently, Alberta Education conducts annual satisfaction surveys with stakeholders, including students. Third, through this and other initiatives, "the government could hopefully become more proactive in its planning of curriculum and policies as opposed to reactive" (teacher, rural high school, 1999) to interest groups and budget cuts. Policies need revisions, as does the curriculum. Policies affect teachers as much as students. The prime example is in-service or university education for teachers to teach CALM. The effects or consequences of not having this piece in place have been ongoing frustrations from students, teachers, and parents.

Teachers felt that Alberta's education system is not on the cutting edge as the public has been led to believe. Alberta needs to be assessed along with other provinces. Western Canadian and Pan-Canadian protocols should be the way to go, from the teachers' and students' point of view. It is important to have the same curriculum and information as a Canadian, and not only as an Albertan:

> And I'd also like to see them, I guess, look at the other provinces and see, our curriculum should be matching, if not excelling, the other provinces in preparing students. That's another thing they should be looking at. I like the idea that they have the Western Canadian Protocol for different subject areas. I think that is really good, especially from the students' point of view, that if they're moving and stuff, you know that they're going to be taking the same curriculum, same information; and I think that's very important if you're trying to educate a Canadian as a whole and not just segregating them as an Albertan. (teacher, outreach school, 1999)

Fourth, teachers suggested that government and Alberta Education needs to focus on long-range changes and impacts. Curriculum and policies should be revised on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders through various means, including pilots, and what is irrelevant should be eliminated; what is working and what is not should be considered. A long-range plan is required for every course as part of curriculum development and reform. "But I think a piloting process is really important. We probably need more than one year to pilot a major curriculum change" (teacher, urban high school, 1999).

Government also needs to consult more widely with all stakeholders. They need to reach people at the basic level as well as the upper levels of education administration or public health administration. An example would be to have Alberta Education make an official announcement regarding the CALM review and request or invite input through all venues including broad community meetings. People have the right to provide their input to policy as well as other things

In addition, the government needs to conduct or support research to defend its position better. If decisions are made, on what are they based? Government needs to communicate these results and reasons clearly to taxpayers and stakeholders. Government is accountable to the public: "We have to take in all the research and stats [statistics] and costs and all those things and balance it off with people's opinions and experiences. It takes some skilled people to do that" (health professional, 1998).

For the most part the health professionals implied that government has the resources to do a complete and thorough job of researching and consulting the CALM curriculum and related policies before making any revisions. Government needs to use these resources wisely and to consult broadly; otherwise there will be poor follow-through and perhaps unrest again in five years or less: "Make this curriculum relevant, . . . maybe not called CALM, but whatever they want to call it, that the life skills type of information needs to continue in schools in some venue that's meaningful" (health professional, 1998).

Documents of Decision Makers

Alberta Education and the Alberta government issued some significant secondary documents in the 1990s with regard to educational changes and decisions concerning education curriculum and policies. These provided micro and macro influences on outcomes of curriculum and policy development and reform decision-making processes, and stakeholder involvement.

As mentioned previously, I was not able to access primary source documents unless as a direct participant. However, I was told by decision makers, both from Alberta Education and government officials, that memos and internal documents concerning curriculum and policy reform, as with CALM, had been circulated "in house." Otherwise, communication about the curriculum revision of kindergarten to Grade 9 health education and CALM would have been announced first in *Connection: Information for Teachers*, which is a publication of the student programs and evaluation division of Alberta Education (1998b). For example, in the October 1998 issue of *Connection*, the health program revision update for K to 9 health education was announced. It basically stated that "a draft K-9 program of studies is scheduled to be distributed to all schools for review by March 1999" (p. 10). Similar announcements have apparently been made to teachers regarding the CALM revision update. Unfortunately, there are no other public records of either the K-9 or CALM revision.

Also in the 1990s, Alberta Education began to publish its business plans, which contained highlights of total education spending, education infrastructure, and the results, strategies, and measures of goals and outcomes. Stakeholder and public satisfaction as part of annual surveys were provided as updates in the business plans. The latest business plan is for three years, from 1998 to 2001, and so far separate annual results reports have been provided for 1998 and 1999. The *Fifth Annual Results Report on Education 1999* (Alberta Education, 1999) summarized the measures and satisfactions with the education system and services. For example, under Goal 2, which states, "Education in Alberta is responsive to students, parents, and communities" (p. 18), the desired result is that "parents, business and the community have meaningful roles in education" (p. 18). Regarding opportunity to be involved in decisions at schools, 79% of parents and 62% of the public were satisfied, whereas 52% of parents and 30% of the public were satisfied with actually being involved in decisions at schools. The percentage of parents, students, and the public satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations were 75%, 87%, and 59%, respectively. This latter statistic reflects the desired result that "parents and students can choose schools and programs within the public education system" (p. 20).

These and other findings from annual surveys conducted by Alberta Education are published for those interested in accessing records for accountability, as reviewed by the Auditor General. Alberta Education has indicated that it will need to demonstrate its accountability to the public:

> The provincial government developed a comprehensive concept of accountability which expanded the focus from accounting for dollars spent to include accounting for results achieved. Accountability for performance involves developing plans to make best use of resources available, assessing results to determine if expectations are being met, identifying where improvement is needed, and reporting the results to the public. . . . The accountability cycle for the basic education system (*Accountability in Education—Policy Framework*, June 1995) was developed to describe the application of government's comprehensive concept of accountability to the education system. . . . This cycle focuses on continuous improvement and on the linkage of school board plans and reports to each other and to the provincial directions for the learning system, as reflected in the *School Authority Accountability Policy, 2.1.1* in *Policy, Regulations and Form Manual*. (Alberta Learning, 2000b, p. 24)

This latter quotation is from the *Guide for School Board Planning and Results Reporting*, developed in March 2000. It provides an outline of the requirements for school boards to prepare three-year plans and an annual education results report.

All of these regulations and policies are referenced back to the Alberta School Act (1988, with amendments in force as of May 19, 1999) and override all processes and operations of Education. This act is at the macro level of governance of education, with the Minister having overall ultimate authority to make decisions on any issue concerning education. Under the School Act are many other regulations passed by the Government of Alberta, including the Private Schools Regulations (Alberta Government, 1989), Charter Schools Regulation (Alberta Government, 1995), School Councils Regulations (Alberta Government, 1998a), Student Evaluation Regulation (Alberta Government, 1998b), Home School Regulation (Alberta Government, 1999b), and Certification of Teachers Regulation (Alberta Government, 1999a). All of these regulations outline specific roles, responsibilities, and activities pertaining to specific education stakeholders, schools, and councils.

Another regulation which has an impact on how all policies and regulations are reviewed and reformed in Alberta is *The Alberta Regulatory Reform Policy* (Government of Alberta, 1996). The work plan for this policy objective states that

> Regulatory reform will be a permanent feature of this Government's ongoing efforts to improve the Alberta Advantage. The criteria, goals, strategy and process will be refined as we learn from our experiences. The strategy will be focused on the government's three core responsibilities:

> - People . . . helping people to be self reliant, capable and caring.
> - Prosperity . . . promoting prosperity for Alberta through a dynamic environment for growth in business, industry, and job.
> - Preservation . . . preserving the Alberta tradition of strong communities and a clear environment. (p. 2)

Out of this Alberta Advantage concept, the government has supported the development in 1997 of the *People and Prosperity: A Human Resource Strategy for Alberta* (Alberta Education, 1997). Since the merger of Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development in May 1999, Alberta Learning has promoted the human resource strategies in schools through the Career and Technology Studies, Registered Apprenticeship Program, and Integrated Occupational Program. In the document *People and Prosperity: Accomplishments and Outlooks*, the Alberta Government (1999) pointed out that in cooperation with community partners, it has

> developed a range of programming to assist high school students to develop general employability and occupational-specific skills. Upon completion of these programs, students may directly enter the workforce, go on to complete an apprenticeship in a recognized trade, or pursue further education and training at a postsecondary institution. (p. 26)

The latest update in terms of the CALM curriculum revision is that a Life Skills 10 curriculum draft (December 1999) went out for stakeholder response and feedback. A *Life Skills 10 Discussion Draft: Summary of Responses* (Alberta Learning, 2000c) provided recommendations for additional changes. There were no identified student responses in the summary. The responses are being incorporated into another draft for the pilot. Although no decision has been made yet, the new curriculum could be called Senior High Life Skills or remain as CALM 20. It reflects "the unique developmental needs of adolescents and to assist students in making a successful transition to adult roles and responsibilities" (p. 2).

Other secondary documents mentioned in previous chapters have micro and macro considerations for curriculum and policy development and reform and stakeholder involvement. Some of these documents reflect activities which might have a greater influence on CALM's outcome than others, and therefore are more relevant in this study than others which involve other programs and policies.

Summary of the Micro and Macro Considerations

All individuals in interviews and focus groups indicated government's set approaches with curriculum and policy development and reform. Most participants felt it is a top-down hierarchical decision-making model which is difficult to change without a conscious attitude to do so. However, there are some positive things which can come out of this. For one thing, the government including the Minister of Learning and Alberta Learning, can, if proactive and democratic, seek extensive consultation processes with stakeholders. The Alberta government has the power and authority to be flexible and open about involving any and as many stakeholders as it wants. Stakeholders are encouraging government and Alberta Learning to communicate and consult more with groups and the public. That's where the vote and difference can be made.

Many micro and macro factors were identified by each group. Most identified the reason for so much inflexibility with Alberta Education and the government's approach in involving students and stakeholders in curriculum and policy decisions. The "black box" concept and closed door policy seemed to be very much the image portrayed of government, including Alberta Education. However, stakeholders were also viewed as not caring or wanting to participate. Decision makers suggested that stakeholders have options available to them to use to challenge government, such as MLAs, school councils, and the local school level, but many stakeholders choose not to do anything.

There were many recommendations and suggestions for changes seen in these micro and macro considerations. Some of these included (a) more open communication, such as a public announcement regarding CALM, and breaking down barriers, including the stereotyped image of government in a "black box"; (b) more open consultation through different means and with different groups, including students at all levels (rural, urban, outreach, graduates, and others); (c) more proactive planning and long-range planning to involve stakeholders; (d) ongoing work and visits with schools; (e) more student involvement with Alberta Education, such as on committees or through other means; and (f) more research to support government's and others' claims about effectiveness of approaches and strategies used for program and policy analyses.

As the last construct, the Micro and Macro Considerations links back with the two issues and the other two constructs. Together they reveal the understandings and actual events concerning the CALM curriculum review and reform processes, and the involvement of stakeholders and students in these processes. The next chapter will critically discuss these findings and conclusions in relation to the three major themes identified—*power relations, sociopolitical issues,* and *knowledge/power discourse*--and will form the archeological framework.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION: A CONCEPTUAL ARCHEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

> Alberta's public education system is failing based on its own achievement-test results, says a controversial education consultant. Dennis Lapierre, project director of School Works, says statistics released by Alberta's Learning show student scores get progressively lower as they move from Grade 3 to Grade 6, and from Grade 6 to Grade 9. Alberta Learning officials dismissed Lapierre's latest assessment as full of errors. They say the numbers show the kids and the system are all right. . . . Lapierre said, "This evidence cannot be denied. They can put their spin on these results but they can't explain away the evidence." (Barrett, 1999, p. A7)

Overview

This chapter examines the major constructs including categories and conclusions, as described in Chapters 4 to 8, and their relationship to two main issues. The relationships and linkages between each of the issues and constructs are explored and critically analyzed in the context of the conceptual archeological framework.

Conceptualizing the Archeological Framework

There are four distinct and yet closely linked constructs and related categories which have emerged from the data in this study. The two issues of the first construct link the other three constructs and their categories. How these constructs relate to each other can be best described as a layering of information and discussions such that these layers are distinct and yet interconnected, a concept that supports an archeological process and framework. Such a framework has been depicted in Figure 1. Together the issues and core constructs represent a program and policy analysis and reform framework. The layers, although portrayed as distinct layers, are dependent on one another, and all layers must be applied for the analysis and reform process to be complete.

Embedded within each of the layers are the various stories, experiences, values, beliefs, social constructions of discourses and practices, hegemony and social practices, dominant cultures, power relations, other truths and realities, conclusions, and recommendations for change. These are the data which were described in Chapters 4 through 8. Many categories and conclusions were summarized and drawn from the data, and linked with three major themes—*power relations, sociopolitical issues,* and *power/knowledge discourses*. This latter information is what gives the archeological framework its infrastructure of interconnected layers. In an

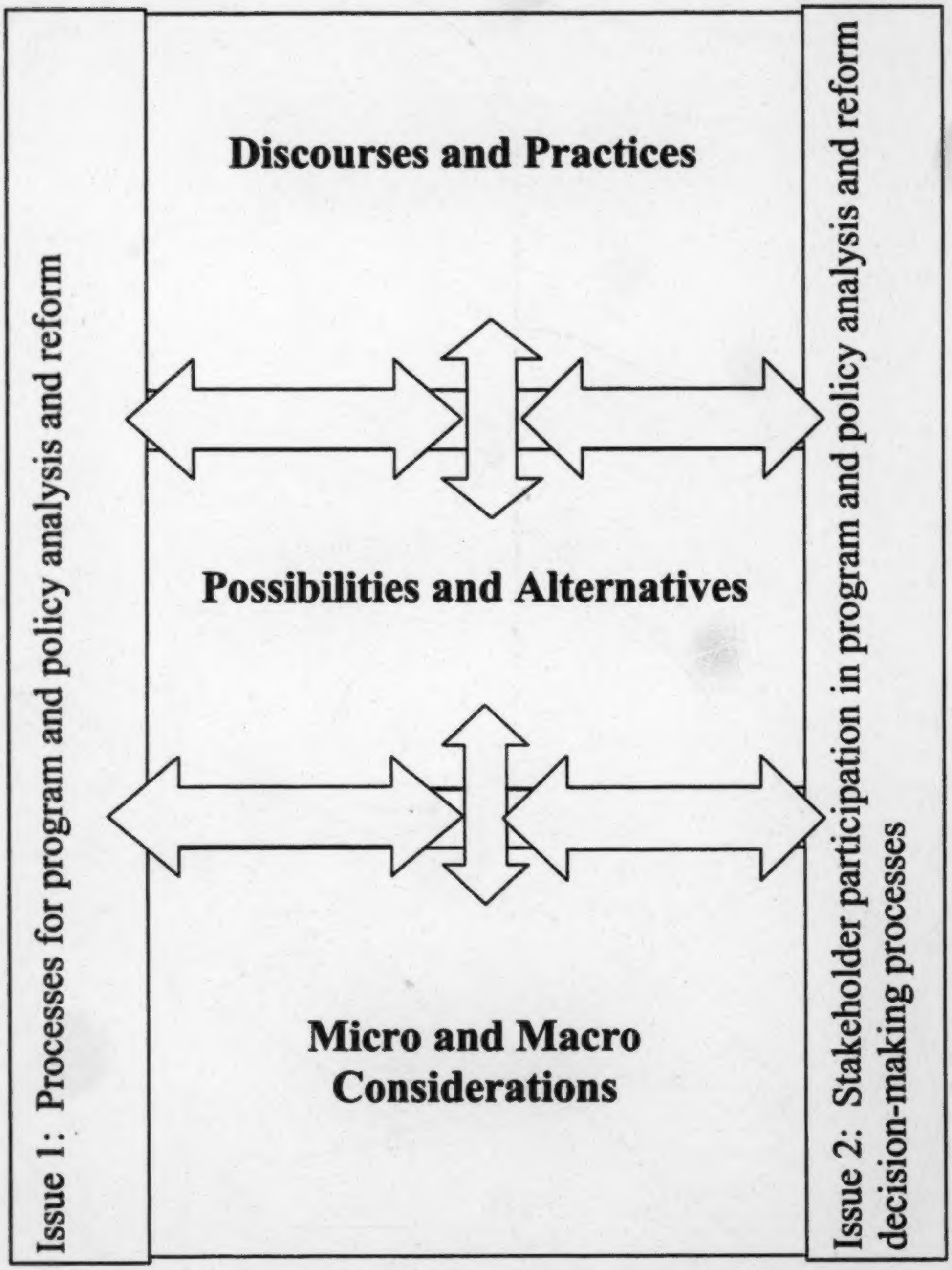

Discourses and Practices
Possibilities and Alternatives
Micro and Macro Considerations
Issue 1: Processes for program and policy analysis and reform
Issue 2: Stakeholder participation in program and policy analysis and reform decision-making processes

Figure 1: Program and policy archeology: analysis and reform processes, and stakeholder involvement.

archeological framework and process the obvious aspects of an investigation are seen or talked about, but the theoretical components will bridge the gaps among the themes and conclusions.

Some things will be missed or overlooked in the search, but the major pieces will be exposed through the critical analysis. For example, through the analyzed data, the themes and conclusions support the premise that education reform has a dominant political and bureaucratic culture framed in its own hegemony and ideology. McLaren (1998) called this "ideological hegemony," which he described as "[the] customs, rituals, beliefs, and values [which] often produce within individuals distorted conceptions of their place in the sociocultural order and thereby serve to reconcile them to that place and to disguise the inequitable relations of power and privilege" (p. 180). This dominance or hierarchical power of position has a strong presence throughout the layers, and it is one which policy analysts reference with regard to "policy communities," where decision makers (government and departmental staff) are central and stakeholders (who are also the attentive public) are peripheral (Pross, 1986, p. 123). This social practice appears to be a given. However, there are "oppositional ideologies" (McLaren, 1998, p. 181) which do exist and which from time to time allow us to question the dominant ideologies and at least to challenge them and perhaps gradually change them.

Changes to programs and policies have been known to occur as documented, but the democratic processes involved are often questionable. As Pearl and Knight (1999) argued about education specifically, "Democracy was too great a leap to be attempted, and efforts were made to work around it. Our argument is that education was never organized for democracy and, as a consequence, democracy, never given a try" (p. 28). In this case study, the observations, documents, and discussions during interviews and focus groups made it apparent that although democracy and democratic principles were part of our language and discourses, they were practiced in questionable ways, if at all (Pearl & Knight, 1999). Coming out of language and its use by individuals in signifying intentions and actions is the premise of either agreement or conflict and unequal power relations. Language, therefore, is a symbol of power and dominance relations, signifying the social reality that power is unequally distributed among people and groups of people, and that power status implies who can engage in discourses which "are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations" (Ball, 1990, p. 2). For, as Foucault (1981) suggested, there is a link between truth, knowledge and power, power/knowledge, and ethics in discourses as portrayed through language and actions (Foucault, 1977a; Gordon, 1980). All these factors influence "how subjects are governed" or allow themselves to be governed, or "how some subjects act on others by governing their conduct" (Simons, 1995, p. 41).

Foucault becomes central in these discussions. He furnished many ideas to the discussions concerning language, discourse, and discursive practices, and to the "viable basis to envision strategies for social change" (Carroll, 1997, p. 31). Foucault's concept of power, power/knowledge, and truth is that no one really owns them, but they are there as part of the relationship established and the "politics of every day life" (Marshall, 1988, p. 105). Essentially, there is the power which constitutes everyday life, and then there is the power which dominates. Miller et al. (1987) suggested that there are many disputes over the definition and concept of power (p. 397). However, Outhwaite and Bottomore (1993) claimed that power is closely associated with social relationships. They defined power as "the capacity to produce, or contribute to, outcomes—to make a difference in the world" (p. 504). They asked some key questions for discussions about the significance of power: (1) "Who or what possesses it?" (2) "Which outcomes count as the effects of power?" (3) "What distinguishes power relationships? In what ways can the powerful significantly affect others to produce, or contribute to, outcomes?" and (4) "How is the capacity in question to be conceived? Does 'power' identify what an agent can do under various conditions, or only under the conditions that actually obtain?" (pp. 504-505).

This discussion, in turn, opens the possibilities for a "multiplicity of resistances" (Carroll, 1997, p. 31) to social and political arrangements, such as those in education, and allows a challenge of those decisions made against change or for change based on power and power relations. Researchers, as well as program and policy makers would therefore have an avenue to challenge current curriculum and related policies, and although there are dominant cultures and power/knowledge relationships within the education system, this should not preclude consultation and stakeholder input at any time. If the old traditional pre-modern schooling as a panopticon image is to be changed to one which supports emancipatory and critical pedagogy and problem solving at all levels of knowledge and experience acquisition, then there needs to be more flexibility in examining and accepting a transition between education and other areas of life, including democratic practices.

In this study, the framework helps with the merging of these ideas and guides the discussions and investigations concerning program (curriculum) and policy analysis, development, and reform, as well as how, where, when, and why stakeholders are involved. The framework allows for a more critical and focused argument–counter-argument strategy by providing the researcher with the tools to explore and categorize the data gathered from individuals, documents, or observations. One could focus on the chronological experiences and events related to program and policy analysis and stakeholder involvement. This could be a journal entry reported and threaded through all four layers of the framework. The researcher could add to this by exploring language and "language-in-action" (Masson, 1997, p. 67), power relations, knowledge/power discourses, truth, and ethics of decision making, or other aspects of democracy and democratic participation or ideology. There could be many types of critical analyses between and within the layers.

In this study, I chose a combination of critical theory and analysis perspectives or approaches. Although the framework provides the guide, the process within and between the layers is at the discretion of the researcher and the type of study or investigation proposed for program and policy analysis. Is it an analysis *of* or *for* program and policy analysis? Who is involved and how? Is it an analysis for development of program and/or policy, revision, deletion, or status quo? For students, a power issue is identifying when they participate in and influence the decision-making processes concerning their education. Do students have a voice and a choice in education curriculum and policy reform? What is the relationship between the government decision maker and the student consumer? Are students viewed as stakeholders in education curriculum and policy reform, or not? Each layer in the framework provides some of the answers and adds to the overall investigation, recommendations, and outcomes of the analysis.

Application of the Framework

In the application of the framework, the discussions move from the general to the specific as related to each of the key themes in each layer or within each of the core categories. From the data analysis, the central theme was "power" as related to three dominating themes: *power relations, power/knowledge*, and *sociopolitical considerations*. These themes have been used throughout the analyses in each of the following sections and in the case application of the conceptual archeological framework. The section begins with an examination of the two issues which frame this study.

Understanding the Issues in Program and Policy Analysis

The application of the framework starts with the first layer or construct, consisting of the evidence and data, which identifies the "the issues." The issues, like the policy problem in policy analysis, form the basis for the investigation. In this study two closely linked issues were identified, those of (a) program and policy development and reform, and (b) stakeholder involvement in the decision-making processes.

Methodological Argument

As a potential counter-argument to the two issues identified in this study, the literature for policy analysis has suggested that there generally is only one issue or "policy problem" identified, which is then investigated. The "policy community" or stakeholders and decision makers, are viewed as a separate entity from the problem or issue in policy analysis. However, in this study the policy analysis protocol differs in two ways. First, this study addresses both program and policy analysis, which I believe is an analysis of two closely connected entities because in reality one does not often happen without the other. This is particularly true in publicly funded programs and services such as in education, health, and social services. Policies are developed for social controls or for placing conditions on programs such as those being targeted to specific groups or those being mandated in the broadest sense for citizenry skill and knowledge development and for the betterment of society. Programs are developed to achieve the aims and principles of policies. It is often difficult to determine which comes first, and which one is a reaction to the other. I believe that one cannot be effectively analyzed without an analysis of the other.

Second, in this study the premise is that program and policy analysis development and reform do not occur without stakeholders and being involved. Essentially, all programs and policies are targeted at interrelated groups of individuals, some of whom are the decision makers, others are developers, and still others are implementers or recipients. It is difficult to develop programs and policies using the same individuals to do all the work. Expertise is required from different sources, hence the premise that stakeholder involvement and consultation occur simultaneously with the program and policy development and reform and with the identification of the issue or problem related to programs and policies. In this study, stakeholder involvement was an issue, along with the problem-identified program and its related policy. In other studies, the issues may be different because their identification will come from different cases and therefore different sources of data. However, the arguments and counter-arguments will still involve challenging the decisions for program and policies and stakeholder involvement. As Moore and Muller (1999) pointed out,

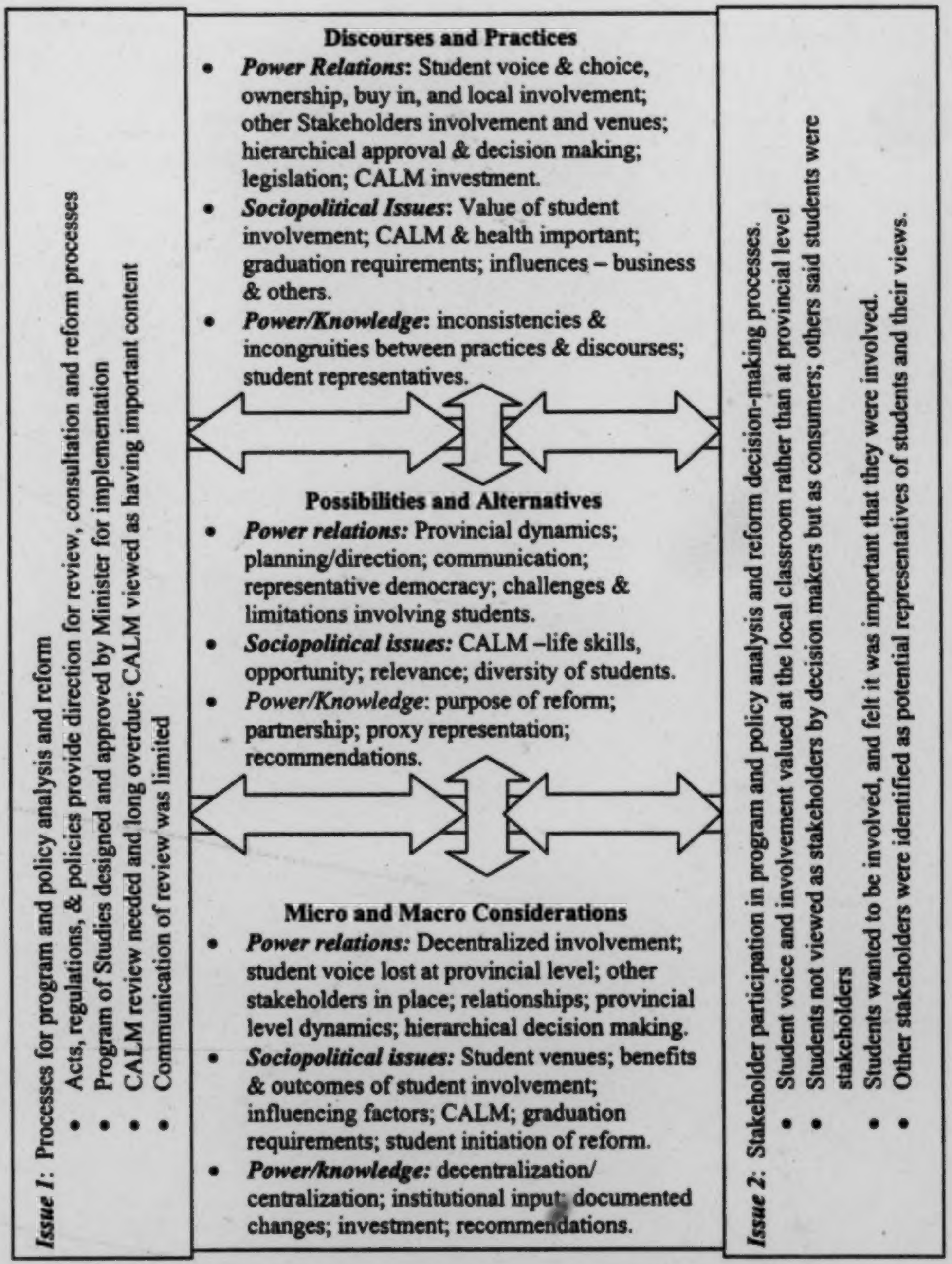
> From a sociological point of view, the position is the same. At the level of issues, the rhetoric changes in each case, but their logics have a common and constant form—that of contesting a dominant knowledge claim by differentiating a subordinated category, and constructing its distinctive identity and interest by way of authorizing its own voice and authenticity of experience as knowledge. (p. 193)

As identified specifically in this case study, the two main issues hold equal weight: the review of the CALM curriculum and the policy which makes it mandatory for graduation, and the involvement of students and other stakeholders in the analysis or review processes. There is a direct relationship between the two issues, because it appears logical to assume that program and policy analysis and reform should not happen without stakeholder involvement if the programs and policies are to be successfully implemented. But stakeholders can be involved in consultations or decisions only if there is an issue or issues with the programs or policies.

It was evident from the data there were other categories and conclusions related to the two major issues. These reflected the existence of complex power relations, sociopolitical issues, and language around knowledge/power (Foucault, 1981). This is not unusual because education and schools are known to have a pronounced political presence (Crump, 1992) and hierarchical relations (Pinar & Bowers, 1992). These themes are listed in Figure 2, and are discussed in the following theoretical sections as "issues."

Theoretical Argument Concerning CALM and Related Policies

The history of CALM and its related policy reveals the sociopolitical forces at work, power/knowledge discourses and power relations. CALM became a reality because of the various forces applied in all directions in the mid-1980s. Decision makers (Alberta Education bureaucrat, 1998) said that CALM was designed as a 'Cadillac' curriculum with all the bells and whistles. It had accompanying resources, input from many stakeholders, and in-service for teachers; and it was mandatory as outlined in the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Alberta Education, 1985). It is known that both CALM and the policy have undergone reviews since their development. CALM 20 sat in its revised draft form from 1993 to present. The Secondary Education Policy Review Forum (Alberta Education, 1990) resulted in different documents with basically the same messages regarding the need for teacher inservices, stakeholder and student participation and involvement in education reviews, and curriculum resource needs. In 1997-1998 the process started again, with various concerns from stakeholders including parents apparently through their MLAs, teachers, students, others such as the corporate or business sector, and health professionals. Obviously, these concerns were brought to the attention of the then Minister of Education, who, in turn, decided to review and revise CALM. This is the type of educational reform process which Apple (1991), Lindquist (1990), Curley (1988), and Pross (1986) have identified as being influenced from the bottom-up movements involving diverse individuals with self-interests or groups with common ideals and interests. These diverse groups have used the political process as their democratic right to influence the educational system, particularly to force a review of CALM and of the policy which makes it mandatory. From these historical and current events, it becomes apparent that the policy to make CALM 20 mandatory is one issue, but



Issue 1: Processes for program and policy analysis and reform

- Acts, regulations, & policies provide direction for review, consultation and reform processes
- Program of Studies designed and approved by Minister for implementation
- CALM review needed and long overdue; CALM viewed as having important content
- Communication of review was limited

Discourses and Practices

- ***Power Relations***: Student voice & choice, ownership, buy in, and local involvement; other Stakeholders involvement and venues; hierarchical approval & decision making; legislation; CALM investment.
- ***Sociopolitical Issues***: Value of student involvement; CALM & health important; graduation requirements; influences – business & others.
- ***Power/Knowledge***: inconsistencies & incongruities between practices & discourses; student representatives.

Possibilities and Alternatives

- ***Power relations:*** Provincial dynamics; planning/direction; communication; representative democracy; challenges & limitations involving students.
- ***Sociopolitical issues:*** CALM –life skills, opportunity; relevance; diversity of students.
- *Power/Knowledge*: purpose of reform; partnership; proxy representation; recommendations.

Micro and Macro Considerations

- ***Power relations:*** Decentralized involvement; student voice lost at provincial level; other stakeholders in place; relationships; provincial level dynamics; hierarchical decision making.
- ***Sociopolitical issues:*** Student venues; benefits & outcomes of student involvement; influencing factors; CALM; graduation requirements; student initiation of reform.
- ***Power/knowledge:*** decentralization/ centralization; institutional input; documented changes; investment; recommendations.

Issue 2: Stakeholder participation in program and policy analysis and reform decision-making processes.

- Student voice and involvement valued at the local classroom rather than at provincial level
- Students not viewed as stakeholders by decision makers but as consumers; others said students were stakeholders
- Students wanted to be involved, and felt it was important that they were involved.
- Other stakeholders were identified as potential representatives of students and their views.

Figure 2: Program and policy archeology application to CALM and policy review, and stakeholder and student involvement: Themes (*power relations, sociopolitical issues, and power/knowledge discourse)* linking constructs and categories.

another issue is, who will be involved in deciding what changes and how? Who makes the decision of who will be involved in the processes of education program and policy analysis or review and reform?

Many decision makers were quick to support the existing School Act, legislation, and policies related to the Minister's role and a hierarchy of approval for curriculum reviews, revisions, and policy changes related to curriculum. But more of the other study participants who were interviewed or were in focus groups challenged this hierarchy of approval and claimed it to be an issue concerning curriculum and policy development or reform. The teachers, parents, health professionals, and even students substantiated the need for government and Alberta Education to consult with them regarding curriculum changes, particularly courses such as CALM which cover life skills. Students and others are affected directly by changes to the curricula and have suggested how courses such as CALM should be changed. The gain in consultation results in the ownership of the end product by all stakeholders who have a vested interest in making the Program of Studies a success.

> It would seem that from a political perspective, collaboration is about the realignment of relations of power and the articulation of a specified form of change (e.g., moving in the direction of developing a critical citizenry). Collaboration, in the more common view, is about working within the confines of established relations of power and making unspecified improvements in schooling. . . . Those who focus on the educational community appear less concerned with the problems of bringing together those who occupy different occupational slots within the educational hierarchy (e.g., administrators, district officers, teachers, parents, and even students) and instead emphasize what can be gained by this type of collaborative arrangement. Nevertheless, both views accept the current educational hierarchy as legitimate in that there are few, if any, attempts to realign, rework, or challenge relations of power. . . .Instead, the intention is to bring groups together to enhance a generic type of school improvement. (Gitlin, 1999, pp. 632-633)

Theoretical Argument Concerning Student Participation

The view of decision makers that students' input was more productive and valuable at the local school and classroom levels where students and their teachers could contribute directly to the evaluation and delivery of the curriculum was also one which was acknowledged and supported by students, teachers, parents, and health professionals. However, the latter groups also challenged those decision makers who did not view students as stakeholders and saw students as having no real place in being involved in curriculum or policy reform processes at the provincial level. Not all decision makers felt this way; a few decision makers felt that students were stakeholders, and one even suggested that students needed to be partners in education. Most decision makers generally viewed students as consumers or recipients of education, and not as stakeholders in the sense of making decisions and actually being involved in curriculum and policy analysis, development, or reform. As Palumbo (1987) pointed out, decision makers are not inclined to risk failure or political embarrassment with educational goals and policy. They are more inclined to listen to students' needs but not to view them as public stakeholders involved in curriculum or policy evaluation and reform processes (Chelinsky, 1987; Patton, 1987). In addition, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) stated that

> innovations and their inherent conflicts often become ends in themselves, and students get thoroughly lost in the shuffle. When adults do think of students, they think of them as the potential beneficiaries of change. They think of achievement results, skills, attitudes, and jobs. *They rarely think of students as participants in a process of change and organizational life.* (p. 11)

Students, parents, teachers, and health professionals agreed that students needed to be heard, because their perceptions are often different from those of adults. Even decision makers realized this difference. They acknowledged that student input would be valuable particularly for a course such as CALM. Everyone felt that CALM needed revision and that students should be involved in the CALM review to make it more relevant to them assuming that CALM is to remain in the curriculum. The challenge, of course, is first to involve students despite the acknowledgement that some students do not care to be involved. However, these students, too, must be respected for their choice and views. As Elmore (1987; as cited in Boyd & Kerschner, 1988) reminded us, "The existence of choice, and of active choosers, within public school systems doesn't mean that those systems are necessarily responsive to all clients" (p. 79).

Most study participants felt that some students are skeptical that they would be heard even if given the opportunity to be involved. Foucault's (1977) perception of the student being in a panopticon, observed, tested, disciplined, and primed as a docile body, set the tone for the general concerns of most students and of their status in high school. Unfortunately, students do not have the autonomy or authority to present their views of curriculum and policy without an invitation. Their age, questioned maturity, experience level with decision making (Esbensen, 1991), controlled autonomy with specific school activities (Kamii, 1984; McLaren, 1985), lack of power in controlling education and dependency on parental values and finances, and teachers directives put them in an awkward position of defense rather than one of power or influence (Bottery, 1992). As a result, the students and others felt that other stakeholders could better represent students and would have more voice because of their status as voters and taxpayers. Teachers, parents, and graduates were seen as good alternatives or representatives for high school students to speak on their behalf about curriculum and policy reform. Students felt that teachers would be in the best position to represent their views from daily school experiences and discussions.

In addition, students felt that they would be better stakeholders at the classroom level evaluating curriculum and delivery approaches with their teachers, as long as the teachers were open to doing this. Not many students have had the opportunity of evaluating either the curriculum or the delivery approaches with their teachers. Cheung et al. (1996) supported the fact that students can contribute best from the classroom level:

> Students are consumers of curriculum innovations. Implementation failures, in which the intended outcomes cannot be realized, are particularly painful for students, for whom a benefit was anticipated. So, from an educational view, students are legitimate stakeholders in research on curriculum implementation and their perceptions are as important as those of the teachers and other stakeholders. To accurately measure the micro-implementation of curricula, it seems inappropriate to ignore students' perceptions of the implementation process in their classrooms. For example, students can experience changes in the classroom learning environment; they can observe any new teacher behaviors; and they have perceptions of the availability of new teaching materials, the fairness of grading, their own understanding of the program characteristics, and their attitude towards the new curriculum. (p. 51)

Concluding the discussion of the two main issues in this study, it is important to point out the importance of the Parent Commission (1963 to 1966) and the Alberta Worth Commission (1972), which "rejected the historical model of domination by a central executive in a relationship of administrative agency or policy tutelage" (Manzer, 1994, p. 192). These Commissions insisted that

> educational governance of person-regarding education was not simply a matter of empowering children, parents, and teachers in networks of autonomous micro-communities. Their official recommendations strove to balance the needs of individuals and community by strengthening and integrating different levels of educational decision-making in a relationship of policy interdependence. (p. 192)

However, because of the dominance or power relations which existed between government and stakeholders, the consequences are little to no input from students or stakeholders. Students are not acknowledged as stakeholders and not valued at the provincial level which leaves students with very little choice. They are already skeptical of the process mentioned to involve them, and if they want to be involved, then the alternatives exist with representatives who can speak on their views and within the classroom where they can provide some feedback to their teachers. On any of the citizen participation ladders (Arnstein, 1969; Conner, 1988; Cress et al., 1988; & Potapchuk, 1991), students would be on the bottom rung, except they have a specific interest in being involved, and they want to be involved. The sociopolitical issues concerning CALM and the policy which makes it mandatory for graduation have also been noted. These issues and their discussions link with the discussions of the three themes as related to the categories and conclusions for the discourses and practices as well.

Reflecting on the Discourses and Practices

The second layer of the archeological framework examines the "discourses and practices" and related themes. Figure 2 also depicts this layer with the three themes and categories listed. In this layer, historical as well as current experiences, events, discussions, documents, and outcomes are exposed and used as arguments or counter-arguments related to the two issues of program and policy analysis related to development and reform, and including stakeholder involvement. Also provided is a critical analysis of the discourses and practices associated with the program, policy, and stakeholder involvement. Intentions related to stakeholder involvement often influence the consistencies between the discourses and practices. Incongruities are noted when there are differences between discourses and practices.

Incongruities Between Discourses and Practices

Although the power relations between decision makers and stakeholders were initially identified as part of the issues, they are discussed in more detail in this layer which examines the actual practices, discourses, documents, and observations. "Discourses limit both linguistic practices (the textual meanings that can be enunciated), and discursive practices (whether and how these events can occur)" (Carroll, 1999, p. 70). More evidence provided in this layer attests to (a) the relation between discourses and practices, (b) discrepancies between discourses and practices by decision makers as well as stakeholders including students, and (c) the differences in power, power/knowledge, and language between decision makers and stakeholders like students. The impact which these discrepancies and differences have on program and policy outcomes is also discussed as part of this layer, particularly through the actual experiences in the data and the literature. It is important in this layer to note the actual discrepancies between discourses and practices of all involved. For example, one can assess the discourses of decision makers and how they constrain what is said and done by stakeholders regarding curriculum and policy analysis and reform. In addition, discourses can determine the practices of the decision makers themselves. There can also be discrepancies between the meanings of the language or terms used by decision makers and the reality of their intentions, actions, and practices. For example, the dominant discourse may be supportive of stakeholder involvement, but at what level and to what extent? There are also cases where discourses and practices are congruent with stakeholder involvement. From the other perspective, the discourses and practices of stakeholders also influence how they support others in their contributions to curriculum and policy analysis and reform processes. As McLaren (1998) pointed out,

> Discourses and discursive practices influence how we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects. They shape our subjectivities (our ways of understanding in relation to the world) because it is only in language and through discourse that social reality can be given meaning. Not all discourses are given the same weight, as some will account for and justify the appropriateness of the status quo and others will provide a context for resisting social and institutional practice. (p. 184)

In the specific education case study, a number of categories were identified under the construct of "Discourses and Practices," as shown in Figure 2, related to program (curriculum) and policy analysis and reform, and stakeholder (student) involvement. Many of the categories reflect incongruent patterns between the discourses themselves as well as between the discourses and the actual practices (past and current).

For example, the decision makers indicated in the interviews and in the documents, including the *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy* (Alberta Government, 1985) and the Alberta Education *Three-Year Business Plans* (Alberta Education, 1994, 1998e), that student consideration is always foremost in the minds of decision makers of education curriculum and policy and that education should enhance student knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Decision makers said that students need to have ownership in education and be more involved in curriculum. However, the practices suggest that decision makers have considered many other groups as stakeholders in curriculum and policy processes over students. Some students have been involved in forums (Secondary Education Review Forum, 1990), questionnaires and surveys (Alberta Education, 1984a, 1998a), on the Program Assessment Advisory Committee (one high school students and two graduates), School Council (the School Council Act calls for one high school student), but they have not been involved in decisions concerning curriculum and related policy development or reform processes, not even for CALM. Decision makers have even given stakeholder priority and involvement in curriculum and education reform to many groups outside of education, including business. They have spelled this out in *The Framework for Enhancing Business Involvement in Education* (Alberta Education, 1996a), clearly stating that "Alberta Education will develop and/or identify and clearly communicate structures whereby business/employers have input to educational policy making at all levels" (p. 18).

Catering to the corporate and business world is not unusual for any education system which hopes that students will become employable as a result of their education. In Australia, the same attitude prevails:

> In the discourse environment dominated by employers systematically raising complaints about inadequacies of educational outcomes, which, in a practical sense, were by some untraceable leap in logic blamed for the demise of the Australian economy. . . . Yet, even though the link between economic performance and work-related curriculum remained obscure and extremely tenuous, it [*Quality of Education in Australia* report of 1985] found it necessary to pay only a lip service to the issues of personal development and equity, focusing instead almost entirely on measurable outcomes of schooling and their relation to the economic requirements of the nation, and, in the process, redefining the concept of *quality* of education in terms of accessible, work-related and purposeful skills. The *other* aspects of schooling are mentioned almost by accident. (Soucek, 1992, p. 138)

Postsecondary institutions are another group which have had influence in determining the curriculum content and graduation requirements. This has left students and others wondering if education is only for high-level academics, although decision makers say education is designed for all students. Moore and Muller (1999) pointed to the school curriculum as a "'dominant' or 'hegemonic' form of knowledge, . . . 'bourgeois,' 'male,' or 'white'—as reflecting the perspectives, standpoints and interest of dominant social groups" (p. 190). Study participants identified competition among students for course scheduling to complete the core academic requirements or diploma requirements. They claimed that this push and shove attitude has also placed a squeeze on schools, teachers, and students to accommodate, and a squeeze on other courses such as CALM, which is also core but not respected as such. Students and parents have become vocal about this clash of core courses, scheduling dilemmas, and meeting postsecondary institution entrance requirements:

> Nowhere was this clash more evident than in the secondary school tracking literature. With the introduction of tracking into school process models in the 1970s, high school curriculum placements came to be viewed as organizational contingencies in individual attainment processes. The conclusion emerging from this early research, that students in college preparatory trades were more successful academically than students in other tracks, even taking into account pre-existing academic and social differences, was viewed either as evidence for the meritocratic operation of schools or how schools perpetuate social inequality. (Riehl, Pallas, & Natriello, 1999, p. 118)

CALM and Sociopolitical Issues

CALM is talked about as a 'soft' core course, difficult to measure because of its value-laden and controversial content. Teachers, students, parents and health professionals, and some decision makers feel that CALM is an important course, but it needs to be revised and needs student involvement to do so. Most study participants (students, parents, health professionals, and 50% of the decision makers) said that student involvement impacts on the purpose, relevancy, and achievements or outcomes for CALM and for education. As Passé (1996) confirmed from experiences with student involvement in curriculum development,

> The possibility of making poor curricular decisions is reduced when students are given the responsibility of choosing content. Students tend to select topics that interest them, thus avoiding motivation problems. Their choices reflect their actual needs, rather than those perceived by adults. It makes for a more efficient curriculum development process.
>
> Curricular decision-making power belongs in the hands of students because it is their lives that are being affected—their day-to-day school lives and also their future lives. Giving them this power is not a fad, or way for teachers to pass the buck. It is a method of developing autonomy, motivating children to learn, and developing strong citizenship skills. (p. 9)

The problem is usually with curriculum revision. The discourse and practices vary as to what should be done or changed and who should do it. Curriculum and policy need to be critically analyzed and decisions carefully made as to what is retained, reformed, or developed. Greene (1995) suggested that "when we ponder curriculum, or questions as to what knowledge is worth communicating (in what forms), we might ask whether we can construct and deconstruct at the same time" (p. 9). The same approach happens with policy, as evidenced in the changes to education policy, acts, and legislation between 1985 and 2000 in Alberta. Through interviews, focus groups, available document, or observations, I am not aware of any students being involved in actual policy review or decision making.

Power Relations and Involvement of Students and Stakeholders

Students did, as previously mentioned, have some input into opinionnaires about secondary education (Alberta Education, 1984a) and surveys about CALM (Alberta Education, 1998a), and a few students did attend some consultations (Alberta Education, 1990, 1998a), but their role is seen by most stakeholders as not at the decision-making table, but rather as participants at the classroom level evaluating the revised curriculum (1999) and the delivery approaches with teachers. Decision makers have actually said that if student involvement at this local level had been stronger with teachers, student experiences would have been better. This did not happen, and it consequently opened up the door for student dissatisfaction and vocal dissent from others as well. In fact, some decision makers have linked the relevance of the CALM curriculum with the classroom interaction and delivery approach used. If the course is delivered in a relevant way to or with students, then the importance of CALM also becomes evident to them. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) pointed out that "*relevance* includes the interaction of need, clarity of the innovation (and practitioner's understandings of it), and utility, or what it has to offer teachers and students. . . . Relevance and importance do matter" (p. 63). Students said that they want to be more involved at the classroom level with curriculum evaluation and delivery approaches, but they do not feel that they have been given the credit by teachers or others to contribute. Outreach students were the only ones who mentioned that they had some contribution in the classroom. The majority of students otherwise did not feel that they had been involved in curriculum evaluation, and they had not been asked to be involved, not even by their teachers. This lack of consensus of where and how students should be involved and who should make the decisions to involve them, if it is desirable to involve students, is again evidence of the incongruity amongst the discourses—who has said what, when, and how—and the practices. The power to suppress students as well as influence emancipatory behavior rests with the teacher (Kritzman, 1988; Marshal, 1989).

Livingstone and Hart (1991) indicated that

> the most striking find concerning popular perceptions of the extent of public participation in educational decision making is that there is no consensus of opinion. . . . At the most abstract level, the vast majority of Canadians have generally expressed normative support for popular involvement in school decision making. In short, Canadians generally believed that they should have the right to participate in school decision making. (p. 19).

Maybe Canadians, or Albertans, have placed too much expectation on our education system and schools, and maybe these have been unrealistic (Werner, 1991).

On the other hand, education is not a linear model with students entering and leaving school having been taught the optimal curriculum and having outcomes which have given every student, as diverse as each student is, what he/she needs to enter postsecondary education or to get a job or to have the quality of life he/she expects. The model is fraught with many players and stakeholders, uncertainties, and factors including ethical, political, economic, and so on (Werner, 1991). Who influences whom in making the decisions about curriculum and education? It is known that "every interested group does not have equal access to decision making" (p. 107). And it appears that students are at the bottom of the decision-making hierarchy, even in the classroom. Teachers, too, have said that their hands are tied by the Program of Studies which they are required to teach. Some would say that "teachers and administrators may intentionally discourage active choice for the majority of students to prevent the disruption of central administration" (Elmore, 1988, p. 83).

These are some of the elements of panopticism at work, as described by Foucault (1977). The students have to be attentive to participate, and there are very few if any choices. However, one of the things that seems to be missing in the practices is the discourse regarding teacher preparation and in-service and the resources needed to make CALM relevant, practical, applicable, and even important. Students and others have identified these deficiencies. And although students did not recall teacher in-services implemented for CALM in the mid 1980s, teachers, health professionals, and some decision makers blamed the cuts of this training on Alberta Education. From what teachers said, they were left to fend for themselves and teach

CALM the best that they could. Resources and access to public health nurses in the classroom also gradually diminished, the latter because nurses were not seen as part of the teaching team. Even the Alberta Teachers' Association (1988) report and recommendations went unheeded. Consequently, teachers felt that they did not have much flexibility to teach the curriculum; as a result currently, teachers do not respect the curriculum (CALM in this case) and will treat it as a 'secondary course,' rather than as the core course that it is (Cook & Walberg, 1985; Seffrin, 1990). This attitude has been identified by students and others.

In contrast to the public school system, the alternative or outreach and charter schools have the capability of being more flexible. Teachers and students in the alternative schools, and even health professionals, all said that the alternative schools provided the opportunity for students to be "equal to teachers" in making decisions concerning the curriculum and delivery of it in the classroom or elsewhere. Students have choice and voice, and they are not helpless victims (Gagné & Robertson, 1995, p. 54). The discourses and practices seem better meshed in the alternative school system. In the alternative approach, Housego (1999) said that

> schools have had to take on something of a customer service approach to the delivery of education in response to the rapidly changing world of the 20th century. The recognition that it may be necessary to serve students as customers, giving them what they feel they need, rather than simply what others decide they need, has led to an assessment of the capacity of schools to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and to the development of innovative educational alternatives. Alternative schools have worked in systems, with systems, and even apart from systems to provide outlets for students who do not quite fit into schools. (p. 85)

This type of school is getting away from the structure and power inequalities of the traditional formal school as we know it, or the panopticon organization as both Foucault (1977) and Ryan (1991) labeled it.

It must be mentioned that even within the public system, students and parents have demonstrated some incongruities in their language and practices. Although they have not been involved in curriculum or policy decision making and wanted to be, the provincial annual satisfaction surveys, as summarized by McEwen (1998) for 1995 and 1996, indicated that high school students and parents were satisfied with both the education received and their involvement in decisions at schools in their communities. These surveys occur annually and offer the opportunity for concerns to be raised by parents and students. Where are they? As McEwen also pointed out,

> The Alberta surveys provide evidence of satisfaction with desired results in The Three-Year Business Plan. The major strength of Alberta's government-sponsored surveys is that they are tied directly to the goals for restructuring education, which means that the information feeds directly into the policy and decision processes. (pp. 33-34)

There is a hidden problem, and that is that the surveys are also designed by Alberta Education.

The Constraints of Legislation

As a final theme emerging out of the discourses and practices category for program and policy analysis and reform and stakeholder involvement, the various acts, legislation, and policies developed as documented between 1985 to the present have put conditions in place for stakeholder participation and involvement in any decision-making processes. In other words, the decision makers have clearly stipulated who will be involved, when, why, and how with education curriculum and policy decision making. This was their answer to interest-group influence and to educational reform (Apple, 1991).

Other than student members on PAAC (1999) and one student representative on the School Councils (Alberta Education, 1998a), students participate in curriculum and policy reform by invitation only. Parents, too, have participation rights through the School Councils (Alberta Education, 1995, 1998). And even this right appears more symbolic than legitimate. Parents admit that they do not attend these or other meetings as they should, but perhaps the incentives are not there either. Boards and administrators are not likely to give parents meaningful participatory decision-making authority, and the boards in turn are overseen by the Minister of Learning (Martin, 1991). The School Council appears more advisory in its capacity. As Griffiths (1993) further pointed out:

> With respect to this policy, the law may be described as 'symbolic legislation.' The policy does not seem to provide an instrumental role in educational decision-making for parents.
>
> To the extent that law enunciates public policy, . . . Alberta laws are but blunt instruments with which parents may make an impact on educational goals and policies. At best, the policy spelled out in the legislative provisions in each case is an incremental step in the right direction and the thin edge of what could become a challenge to traditionally held authority over school decision-making. The new provisions give parents statutory recognition though little else. They open the door for discussion of issues related to parental participation and power in educational decision-making; and they create the conditions within which school administrators may discuss and develop policy on the role of parents in education decision-making. (p. 137)

As far as curriculum items such as with CALM, there are policies in place as well. Some of the legislation and policies were a reaction to redefining secondary education and what was core curriculum or basic education (Apple, 1991). Some of these policies specify the mandatory components of education curriculum with special consideration. For example, for CALM, the Ministerial Orders and Directives on Human Sexuality Education (Alberta Education, 1996c) stipulates that it is a core unit of CALM, and parents have the right to exempt their children from school instruction in human sexuality. Human sexuality education has always been a controversial topic in the CALM curriculum. HIV and AIDS has been another one. Every student will need to know something about both topics at some point. But as Aggleton, Homans, and Warwick (1989) pointed out, there continue to be

> perennial debates about who should teach sex education—whether this should be the prerogative of parents, the task of the education system or the duty of the state. However, the grim reality for many young people today is that either sex education does not take place at all or, if it does, it appears in a strangely contorted and token form. . . . The common reaction of teachers, parents, and politicians has been to adopt a response of 'nervous neglect.' (p. 33)

This is one example where the education system displays its inconsistency. Is sexuality education an 'overt' curriculum or a hidden one (McLaren, 1989), even though it is a core component of CALM, and CALM is mandatory for graduation? This is also an example of what health education is not. Whereas health education attempts to provide information and applicable skills for people to use to solve or to prevent health problems (Pollack, 1987), the fact that students can opt out of sexuality education means that people have focused on the sex and not the implications of sexual health or other related health issues (Connell et al., 1985; Kolbe, 1985, 1986). Is sexuality education any more immoral than young people developing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, because of ignorance?

Closing Discussions on Discourses and Practices

In closing discussions on this construct, it can be said that the categories regarding discourses and practices indicate that decision makers have sent mixed messages about discourses, language, and practices and have not been congruent in supporting students or other stakeholders within education in being involved with curriculum or policy development or reform processes or decision-making processes, even though they think they should be at some level. There are other incongruities between discourses and outcomes even at the local classroom level, which would suggest that although there is verbal support for students to be involved in curriculum and policy reform processes, it does not happen. Students have been consulted through surveys primarily, but what happens to their comments and opinions? In the past 5 to 10 years, there does not appear to have been much student involvement in curriculum or policy reform activities, although a great deal has happened. Nothing has changed, although decision makers say it has. Documents and observations do not support any change in attitudes or actions in this way either. This seems to contradict the findings of Montgomerie (1994), who said that in Alberta, public consultation has become an important component in the formulation of public policy and that the public have a greater say in determining the policies which affect their lives.

Discussing the Possibilities and Alternatives For the Issues, Discourses, and Practices

The next layer in the investigation emerges from the data analysis and discussions as the "Possibilities and alternatives" to the actual practices and discourses with program and policy development and reform, and stakeholder involvement. The three themes along with categories and conclusions are discussed in this layer are depicted in Figure 2.

Defining Alternatives and Possibilities in This Context

Alternatives and possibilities to the actual happenings, or as consideration prior to decisions, are often thought of as theories because it is easier to theorize or speculate that something should be done or tried in lieu of something else. The *New Lexicon Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Lexicon Publications, 1988) defined *alternatives* as "one of two things which must be chosen, or (loosely) one of a number of things" (p. 27). *Possibility*, on the other hand, is defined as "the fact or state of being possible (capable of happening; capable of being done or of coming about; feasible)" (p. 784). Like theories, alternatives and possibilities are points of view just as are theories. Theories could be included in this layer of the framework. Pearl and Knight (1999) suggested that

> what is missing in educational themes . . . is an encompassing educational theory that informs schooling policy and practice. What is needed is a coherent and persuasive vision to inspire all to take responsibility for their lives. Empty slogans such as 'children are our most precious resources' and 'children are our future' must be transformed into meaningful educational practice and policy. The lamentable condition of education, the erosion of support for 'democratic' government, and the many growing crises that go unresolved can be partially laid at the door of the existing nature of education. An education that does not examine the range of plausible explanations for and solutions to important problems can only exacerbate those problems. (pp. 2-3).

Provincial Dynamics

In this case the possibilities and alternatives related to the actual discourses and practices, but they also relate to the "what ifs" of student and stakeholder involvement in curriculum and policy analysis and reform processes. Consequences and concerns can arise with implications of instituting alternatives or possible strategies and approaches. To make changes to the traditional top-down decision-making approach to curriculum and policy reform and include students and others in these processes, there need to be fundamental changes in people's attitudes about power and control versus collaboration, and also about change and what it could mean to the overall outcomes and goals of education. It is one thing to acknowledge something such as recommendations from a forum, but quite another to choose to implement them. Fullan and Miles (1992) stated that

> serious education reform will never be achieved until there is a significant increase in the number of people—leaders and other participants alike—who have come to internalize and habitually act on basic knowledge of how successful changes take place. Reformers talk of the need for deeper, second-order changes in the structures and cultures of schools, rather than superficial first-order changes [curriculum and instruction, community involvement, teacher inservice, evaluation]. But no change would be more fundamental than a dramatic expansion of the capacity of individuals and organizations to understand and deal with change. Rather than develop a new strategy for each new wave of reform, we must use basic knowledge about the do's and don'ts of bringing about *continuous improvement*. (p. 745)

Although it was generally agreed by all participants that students and other stakeholders should be consulted and involved more in curriculum and policy development and reform processes, there were parallel concerns about who should be making the decisions concerning curriculum and policy. With the exception of the parents, participants felt that decisions could or should remain at the 'top' with the Alberta Learning bureaucrats and the Minister of Learning. Parents, on the other hand, felt that the education system cannot continue with the top-down decision-making process without short-term and long-term consequences for education. Parents felt that decision makers paid lip service to stakeholders in education and made decisions regardless of their appearance to consult with stakeholders. Their questions were, "Do decision makers really want input from all the stakeholders? Do they care?" Parents felt that decision-making processes should be learning experiences occurring in all directions, including from the bottom to the top of the decision-making hierarchy. Health professionals agreed that Alberta Learning cannot make changes alone, even with its proposed agenda to accommodate "partners" in education, whoever those are. This comes out of the new provincial mission for the education system which states that "Alberta Learning's leadership and work with partners build a globally recognized lifelong learning community that enables Albertans to be responsible, caring, self-reliant and contributing members of a knowledge-based and prosperous society" (Alberta Learning, 2000a, p. 9).

Decision makers (bureaucrats and politicians) defended themselves by saying that they can involve students and stakeholders any time, as they want or need to. Nothing prevents the Minister of Learning from involving stakeholders, including students, as needed. But there are always limitations to consider. With students specifically, it was felt that they should not have the right to make decisions concerning curriculum or policy. The reasons suggested for this included the students' lack of experience and the difficulty in getting student representations on committees or for discussions. It is not enough to have a 'token' student at discussions, forums, or on committees. Decision makers also mentioned their concern with student militancy if students are given power to speak on services or changes. Students demand rather than suggest. Consequently, student involvement has been and remains very slim. This seems to have been the path of least resistance taken by decision makers. Of what other resistance or demands from stakeholders were decision makers afraid? Other than mandating changes in curriculum and policies, what alternatives did decision makers see for stakeholder involvement? No one doubts that decision makers are pressured by political agendas, economic constraints, and time lines, but stakeholders deserve some consideration in a democratic process. It is known that

> education reform is as much a political as an educational process, and it has both negative and positive aspects. One need not question the motives of political decision makers to appreciate the negative. Political time lines are at a variance with the time lines for education reform. This difference often results in vague goals, unrealistic schedules, a preoccupation with symbols of reform (new legislation, task forces, commissions, and the like), and shifting priorities as political pressures ebb and flow. (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p. 746)

It is not that decision makers can please everyone all of the time, and sometimes it is easier to take the path of least resistance, institute changes to curriculum and policies, and move forward with implementation. Unfortunately, without appropriate and sometimes extensive consultation and stakeholder input, concerns will be raised and outcomes for curriculum and policy change will be ongoing. There seems to be this cyclical process, particularly for courses such as CALM and core curriculum policy (Gehrke, Knapp, & Sirotnik, 1992; Hall & Loucks, 1982; Reid, 1994). There also seems to be an irreparable gap between political process and participatory democracy when it comes to program and policy analysis and reform:

> The process and outcomes of curriculum development embody considerable uncertainty because answers to the central value questions about content (what should be taught?), distribution (for whom?), timing (when?), and involvement (who should decide?) are not predetermined. These questions are answered anew each time a policy is devised, and sometimes are contested by groups within and without ministries of education and school systems. This struggle to reconcile or accommodate competing interests and values may result in a curriculum that does not satisfy everyone, and that contains ambiguity and contradictory implications for schools. For example, in an attempt to satisfy the demands of various groups, statements of student learning goals maybe so general that they provide little guidance to teachers. School staffs may be encouraged to take greater control for specifying these goals, at the same time that centralized student testing is

> increased. Such inconsistencies reflect attempts to satisfy competing values and interests. (Werner, 1991, p. 108)

The decision makers in this study, too, might have realized the narrowness of the one-track political process involving stakeholders in consultation processes, because they certainly did make suggestions for alternative or possible strategies. They felt that they definitely needed to have a more 'coordinated approach' or a 'joint planning mechanism' in place to involve students and other stakeholders in processes. Alberta Learning participants said that they should be encouraged to utilize more students in discussions and focus groups. One decision maker at Alberta Learning even suggested that they needed to develop a policy on student involvement. There is no doubt that the attitude of decision makers will have to change if they believe, as one former decision maker at Alberta Education stated, that "everyone has a contribution to make."

Communications and Inclusion of Stakeholders

Stakeholders feel that they need to be invited to contribute and that many would not voluntarily contribute or would even know when and what discussions were taking place for curriculum and policy. Teachers said that they often did not know or were not informed about curriculum and policy changes until after the fact. However, as implementers of the curriculum and policy at the local school level, one would expect that teachers would be one of the first groups to know about potential changes to curriculum and policy. Decision makers even said that they would get feedback through the teachers. This would include looking at curriculum outcomes, resources, student expectations, and other aspects. "Curriculum implementation is clearly shaped by teacher expectations of student needs and potential" (Werner, 1991, p. 109).

Students, teachers, parents, and health professionals unanimously felt that they all have something to contribute to curriculum and policy development and reform processes. They all have experiences to share at different levels. Students and others need to be heard, and they need to feel that what they say is valued.

> The goal of autonomy, however, is not easily addressed by a school system in which subject matter that consumes the vast majority of the school day is chosen without student input. The official process of curriculum decision making places that power in the hands of adult political figures and educators. (Passé, 1996, p. 14)

In addition, open communication with Alberta Learning would help them all understand the process of curriculum and policy development and reform. The process needs to be made clear to stakeholders, including students. If ever there was an example of a curriculum and policy that could involve stakeholders in contributing to and understanding the processes, that was and is CALM. Everyone felt that CALM needed revision, but what kind and the extent of the revision was the question. Students and others, including graduates, could have provided their views and suggestions. Concerns about the relevance, purpose, or more specific concerns including the lack of a measuring stick for CALM came from the stakeholders. Teachers felt that there needs to be short-term and long-range plans for CALM, including stakeholder input into curricular content, mandatory aspects, and piloting of the course. These concerns remain to be resolved with the revision of the CALM course for the proposed pilot in September 2000 or 2001. In addition to course revision, it was clearly indicated that teachers need in-servicing for CALM, as was originally planned in the mid 1980s (Teacher Certification & Development Board, 1994). Teachers need other resource and community supports as well.

A number of different approaches for involving stakeholders were mentioned by study participants. Many were similar between the groups, whether they were talking to students at schools or using focus groups, questionnaires, or even technology. No one group felt that there were not going to be challenges involved in getting stakeholder involvement or input, but the sense was that there is a need to give it a try. It all seems to start with decision makers making more effort to provide accurate and open communication about what is happening in education reform and changes in curriculum or policy which ultimately could affect everyone. These two concerns about (a) stakeholder involvement in education reform, particularly curriculum and policy, and that it was a "closed shop" to Alberta Learning for decision making on education curriculum and policy change; and (b) difficulty with communicating the purpose and goals of curriculum and policy to stakeholders, were raised at the Secondary Education Policy Implementation Forum in 1990. Proposed solutions were made at that time to

> consider ways to broaden and increase significant participation of appropriate stakeholders in decision making in various aspects of policy and curriculum development. . . .
>
> Convene a meeting of stakeholders to consider the roles and the problems that various stakeholder representatives have on current curriculum committees. Issues to be considered include communication with stakeholder groups. . . .
>
> Review the methods of communicating policy and implementation decisions, and consider the various roles that all education stakeholders can play in the process. (Alberta Education, 1990, pp. 15-16)

From my point of view, the above recommendations were never respected or implemented. However, stakeholders, politicians, and other decision makers must communicate concerns or make suggestions for change to ensure that agreed-upon suggestions are followed through and not merely given lip service. Stakeholders need to continue taking advantage of the suggestions made by decision makers themselves about providing input at all levels. They need to advocate more vocally for each other at the local level with school boards and School Councils, as well as at the provincial level. And although the goals of the education system seems to be very achievement oriented, there are two goals which still reflect the need to satisfy the learners' and society's needs, as well as those of "partners" in education. These two goals and relevant points are reiterated by Alberta Learning (2000b) in its *Guide for School Board Planning and Reporting*:

> Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities—Responsiveness, Flexibility, Accessibility, Affordability.
> - The learning system meets the needs of all learners, society, and the economy.
>
> Goal 4: Effective Working Relationships With Partners.
> - Joint initiatives meeting the learning needs of Albertans.
> - Partners are satisfied with the effectiveness of partnerships. (p. 8)

Stakeholders have other alternatives as well, one of which includes giving in to the decision makers and going with the flow. At the other end of the continuum is switching allegiance to private or charter schools. Werner (1991) pointed out the above two alternatives as two out of five possible resolutions.

> Resolution of conflict does not always come through consensus as much as through application of power. For groups unable to influence the outcomes of debate in their own favor, or unwilling to compromise their positions, several options are available. First, they may simply accept their lack of power. Second, they may continue to act as a pressure group or contest decisions already made and to influence public opinion. Third, they may influence teachers through materials and inservice education. Finally, they may switch allegiance to private schools whose curriculum is more closely aligned to their preferred values. (p. 108)

As a counter-argument, decision makers should always anticipate debate on curriculum and policy development and reform in education. As a result, there should be some formal mechanism in place to solicit, channel, and shape public reaction (Werner, 1991). As long as there is a need to standardize the Program of Studies, and as long as there are acts, legislation, and policies for schools (School Act, 1988), school boards, and School Councils (Alberta Education, 1998d), and other educational rules, there will obviously be a need to centralize decision making. It has been suggested, however, that "the policy makers in the educational domain will become a more diverse group" (O'Reilly, 1991, p. 127) not only of government officials, but also of civil servants and business and other education community stakeholders. Decisions involving policy, curriculum, and education change must involve the implementers (teachers, principals) as well as recipients (students, parents) if acceptance and compliance are to happen (Fullan & Miles, 1992). This is particularly critical because school boards, which are also accountable for implementation, must report to the Ministry of Learning, although Alberta Learning decision makers have said that implementation is a decentralized responsibility. It is questionable, therefore, that implementation of curriculum and policy can be totally autonomous and separate from curriculum and policy development and reform decision-making processes. The centralized and decentralized decision-making processes need to be clarified, because it certainly appears that the accountability for all aspects of curriculum and policy development, reform, and implementation is still very much centralized.

As pointed out in the Worth Commission (1972) on educational planning, Alberta

> educational decision-making should seek to involve all citizens of Alberta. People must be more than mere clients of the educational system. They must share in determining it. If education truly is to benefit society, it must draw on all of society's strengths. Expertise, then, can be mobilized without granting educators and bureaucrats dominating roles because of their special credentials or strategic positions. (Manzer, 1994, p. 195)

It was also the Worth Commission which recommended a combination of centralized and decentralized educational decision making:

> The provincial government should decentralize authority and place greater responsibility in the hands of locally elected boards. School Boards in turn should ensure that decentralization of authority also occurred within their jurisdictions. Worth recommended the creation of school councils, which would be representative of parents, citizens of the community, school staff, and (at senior stages of basic education) students. The council should be a mature partnership among people which reflects not only responsiveness and influence, but essentially builds on respect, trust, the right of the initiative, and a flexible formula for participation in policy decisions. (p. 196)

CALM Revision

As for CALM specifically, and for many stakeholders who felt that it should be revised and suggested so, CALM has undergone revision as recommended by the Minister. The result has been a revised curriculum draft called Life Skills 10 (December 12, 1999), which has been circulated for feedback to a number of schools, health professionals, community agencies, government departments, parents, and others. About 187 responses were received, 132 from individuals and 55 from groups. The executive report from Alberta Learning (2000c) called *Life Skills 10 Discussion Draft: Summary of Responses* provides the feedback which essentially supports the new curriculum draft but also indicates some considerations regarding policy and implementation. The course will remain compulsory with an opt-in for children by their parents for the sexuality education component. This draft is undergoing revision based on the responses. The new draft may or may not be renamed from CALM 20. Will decision makers go along with the recommendations from stakeholders, or will they make their own suggestions? What are the alternatives or possibilities? Who decides? How will the new curriculum be communicated? Is the new CALM curriculum the answer to health and other life skills management in high school?

How long before the next review? Maybe the answer is in examining a different model which promotes comprehensive school health, working with community resources for strategies in health promotion and population health (Raphael & Bryant, 2000; World Health Organization, 1997). Researchers such as Haber and Blaber (1995), Stone (1990), Nader (1990), and Connell et al. (1985) suggested that one course such as CALM or Life Skills is inadequate for addressing the health issues of youth. There is no doubt that health education and life skills are high priorities in our schools from K to 12. This has been indicated by the different stakeholders over the past 20 years, and even by participants in this study (Cook & Walberg, 1985). Other political, economic, and social reforms no doubt have been instrumental in keeping health education on the school curriculum (Matter et al., 1990). It remains to be seen what the final outcome will be for both the curriculum and policy in Alberta high schools.

Incorporating the Micro and Macro Considerations

In addition to the issues identified, to the practices and discourses concerning the issues identified, and to the possibilities and alternatives around the issues, there are the other micro considerations (subjective and objective interpretation of stakeholders based on their values, experiences, interests, and other social determinants) and the macro considerations (structural and positional power influences, and environmental—physical, social, economic, and political—aspects), which have relevance in the larger societal decision-making context. Often what affects one system affects others such as health and social services, particularly because many micro and macro considerations have sociopolitical, economic, and cultural influences or forces. Thus, the "micro and macro considerations" and related categories emerge as the fourth layer or construct in the archeological framework. The categories which emerged under the three themes for this construct are listed in Figure 2.

Provincial Level Political Dynamics

Much more specific than the social, economic, cultural, and general political processes which impact education and decisions made for curriculum and policy are the neoconservative ideologies of the Conservative government which separate public education from democratic participation in curriculum and policy reform. The neoconservative policy does, however, view consumer choice in public and private schools as important. As with the Reagan and Bush administration in the United States, Klein's neoconservative policies "views public education within a model of reason that celebrates the narrow economic concerns, private interests, and strongly conservative values" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 226). These policies impact on other micro and macro considerations which emerge for program and policy analysis, including stakeholder involvement. As Aronowitz and Giroux further pointed out,

> What is being systematically rejected in this proposal is any commitment to defending schools as sites that have a fundamental connection to the idea of civic responsibility and human emancipation. In other words, within this discourse there is no room for viewing schools as public places where students and others can learn and practice the skills for democratic participation necessary for a critical understanding of the wider political, social, and cultural processes that structure American society. (p. 226)

Although recommendations can be made by stakeholders from a micro and macro context, and in the presence and support of decision makers, there are no guarantees or promises as to the outcomes of decisions made by the decision makers. This pattern is reflected in the historical events concerning education curriculum and policy development in the 1980s and in the events leading up to and since the Secondary Education Policy Implementation Forum Review (Alberta Education, 1990). The events and trends in the 1990s indicate that there have been very few changes in the way decisions have been made or in the attitudes of decision makers towards curriculum and policy analysis and reform, and stakeholder involvement in these processes. It has been made very clear that the ownership of curriculum and policy analysis and reform lies with Alberta Learning and the Minister. The reasons are embedded in the goals of the neo-Conservative government, including the present government, and its move towards centralized authority, "provincial government reform," privatization, and a justification for "getting out of the 'education business'" (Harrison & Kachur, 1999, p. xxiv). Hart and Livingstone (1998) corroborated this neoconservative policy and philosophy which is very evident in the current governments in Alberta and Ontario:

> Under slogans such as 'reinventing government,' there has been a debate about decentralization and competition that extends beyond the right, regarding, for example, Charter Schools. However, neoconservatives are distinct in seeking to restrict the social responsibilities of the state in principle, and in favoring deficit reduction over maintaining programs as a moral good (linked to maximizing individual liberty) not simply a practical necessity. (p. 2)

Along with deficit reduction and government restructuring that included the Department of Education, the present government introduced other changes, some reflected in Alberta Education's (1994) *Three-Year Business Plans*, which noted that "the changes outlined in this plan will alter substantially the character of the education system and ensure a bright future for our students" (p. 3). Among these changes were centralized provincial education funding control, charter schools (1995), home schools (1999), and others which critics say have opened the doors to privatization (Wagner, 1998).

As one decision maker who participated in the study said, government is there to steer, not to row. This theme is very much a macro consideration which has an impact on the curriculum and policy decisions and on the involvement of stakeholders such as students. In fact, this theme transcends every other micro and macro theme that emerges. This power base of the decision makers in government and Alberta Learning is acknowledged by both the decision makers and the other stakeholders. Most of the recommendations for changes are made with consideration for the positional and authoritative power of decision makers. Because of this power discrepancy, there is some doubt that stakeholders can also make changes or influence change, which is important to the outcomes of education curriculum and policy and stakeholder involvement in making decisions on curriculum and policy (Bartunek, 1994). Decision makers think otherwise. But decision makers also need to realize that if they are steering, who is rowing? They cannot steer and row at the same time, and will need the support of others.

Stakeholder Relationship With Government and Democracy

One of the themes which emerges as part of both the micro and macro factors in curriculum and policy development and reform and stakeholder involvement is the 'skepticism' which both decision makers and stakeholders have regarding education and democratic participation. Stakeholders are skeptical of the government's interest in education at the school level or of their respect of stakeholders and their contributions at any level of curriculum and policy. In turn, decision makers are skeptical that stakeholders even want to be involved in curriculum and policy development and reform; and, in fact, the perception is that the public want democracy to be practiced but do not want to practice it or become involved as is their right to do so. This oxymoron was pointed out by Pearl and Knight (1999) as one of the downsides of democracy and participatory democracy. They stated that

> it is not just that democracy has fallen on hard times, it appears that everyone wants to enhance it and yet no one seems to want to be associated with it. In a sense, it was always thus, democracy was something people talked about but rarely did. (p. 3)

There is some of this apathy, but there is more discontent being voiced. Decision makers sense the public's discontent with the education system, and particularly with the bureaucratic and political processes for assessing and doing things or not doing things, including listening to stakeholders. "Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s critics of the schools were able to cite poll results showing widespread dissatisfaction with schools, perceptions of declining quality, and apparently low levels of public confidence" (Hart & Livingstone, 1998, p. 2). This has spurred the government's willingness to explore privatization, vouchers, and perhaps even an abandonment of public education as we know it (Boyd, 1999). Government was also responding to the perceptions of the corporate executives, who are a politically influential group in education decision making and whose perceptions of a deteriorating system have resulted in their lack of confidence in the overall education system. These perceptions reached an all-time high in the 1990s, which triggered some responses from Alberta Education and government to attempt to accommodate. "Deficit reduction and user of market mechanisms are the corporate agenda" (Hart & Livingstone, 1998, p. 16).

Other education stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and health professionals, have felt for a while that decision makers paid them "lip service" as supported by several experiences and perceptions regarding consultation. However, stakeholders and the public also understand that wherever there is a bureaucracy such as government or Alberta Learning, there is an associated hierarchy with decision makers at the top and stakeholders at the bottom. Even stakeholders are separated by their direct political, social, or economic influences (Smithson, 1983); consequently, students are at the very bottom and feel that they are respected the least of all education stakeholders when it comes to having input or being asked for input. As students, teachers, parents, and health professionals said, the relationship between government or Alberta Education and students is 'nonexistent.' Teachers believe that their relationship with Alberta Education is also very weak (Common, 1985a), and health professionals believe that government views health and public health as fluff, so that as health professionals they often feel powerless. What makes it even more difficult for teachers and health professionals is that the funding for their jobs comes from government, and they feel obliged not to publicly criticize government and to accept what they are told to do. Even parents do not feel that they are empowered, regardless of their mandated capability to have input through the School Councils (Alberta Education, 1998d). The link between School Councils and Alberta Learning is still indirect through the school boards. It appears that there are an elite few who can directly communicate with Alberta Education. The 'black box' concept was one which most stakeholders and decision makers felt described government and Alberta Education. Even decision makers realized that Alberta Education, or now Alberta Learning, is not very well known by stakeholders.

However, decision makers also felt that they know what they are doing and what they need to do for curriculum and policy reform. Decision makers at Alberta Learning are autonomous in that they have the power to consult with the public as they need to do. However, although some final decisions rest with Alberta Learning, the ultimate decisions are made by the

Minister. This is a given as per the School Act (1988). As Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) pointed out,

> We will realize that what government policy-makers and administrators do is perfectly understandable to themselves. If it is difficult to manage change in one classroom, one school, one school district, imagine the scale of the problems faced by one state, or province, or country in which numerous agencies and levels and tens or hundreds of thousands of people are involved. It is infinitely more difficult for that government if its personnel do not venture out to attempt to understand the culture and the problems of local school people. . . . Moreover, the vast majority of government personnel, like the rest of us, are just cogs in the machinery. The daily demands and pressures from supervisors and peers in the world of politics are enormous. . . . When all is said and done there are many complaints and few satisfactions. (pp. 253-254)

Avenues for Stakeholder Involvement

However, the decision makers at Alberta Learning and government felt that stakeholders can also initiate curriculum and policy reviews and can influence decisions, if they really want to do so. "How, if they are not invited?" asked stakeholders. The opportunities exist for stakeholders not only at the local school level, such as students working with the delivery approaches with their teachers, but also through School Councils (Alberta Education, 1998d), which can approach the school boards. Although school boards have become more distant from their constituents, the School Councils have been set up to provide access and input (Livingstone & Hart, 1991). Otherwise, all stakeholders can express their concerns to their MLAs. There is no doubt that these are avenues for stakeholder input, but they are not avenues for stakeholders to be part of the actual decision-making processes concerning curriculum and policy. This theme that stakeholders can be involved in curriculum and policy relates directly to the issues identified in the first construct of the framework.

Speaking of stakeholder involvement brings with it another theme from micro and macro considerations—other influences or pressures, educational and noneducational, which will influence or push for decisions from government and Alberta Education. There will always be the economic and environmental factors driving decisions not only for education, but for other systems as well. Social pressures bombarding Alberta Education and government are on the rise. The education system is viewed as a means to deal with social ills and problems. For example, the issue of health education or comprehensive school health is recognized as a pressure (Kolbe, 1986; Matter et al., 1990). The health of youth will impact on their ability to learn and to contribute to society without the added burden of chronic illness or injury. The safe and caring school concept has become more evident as violence is seen to be on the rise in schools. Poverty affects children everywhere and may be a major factor in poor learning or dropping out. In turn, the costs related to drop outs are also a pressure on the education system to become more flexible for students who do not fit into the traditional school system. Hence, the alternative or outreach schools were developed and implemented. There are also more pressures from parents seeking flexible education systems which are more sensitive to their religious, cultural, and language differences. These parents have pushed for private or charter schools and won (Kenway, 1990). The government has seen the positive side of private or charter schools as a release from the publicly funded education domain. "Whether one considers official government documents, the statements of education ministers, or even the government's critics, there is an unbroken consistency from the 1970s to 1990s that the conservative government has favored private education and educational choice" (Wagner, 1998, p. 65).

Parents are not the only stakeholders trying to influence the education system, as voters or taxpayers. There are other public groups, and interest groups, with the intent to exert pressure on the education system in order to influence the values, ideas, and information distributed to students. All these pressures and groups also put government and Alberta Learning into a defensive position. These forces are not new to public education, as noted by Spring (1993):

> The history of public schooling . . . is filled with religious objections to teaching evolution, sex education, and secular humanism, and with demands that schools teach a morality based on religious values. Traditionally, unions and businesses have wanted schools to teach ideas that support their respective economic interests. Political leaders want the schools to teach political values that support their positions, while social crusaders want the schools to solve problems ranging from alcoholism to death on the nation's highways by instilling particular values and information in students.
>
> On the other side of the coin, consumers of education want schools to serve their particular needs. Students and parents might want public schools to provide an education that will enhance their ability to protect their political and economic rights, and provide them with equality of opportunity in the labor market. (p. 25)

Influencing Factors and Forces

It therefore appears that the politics of education involve several areas with forces at conflict. One area includes those competing to have their ideas disseminated through schools. Another area involves parents or others wanting schools to teach the children particular values and ideals. Still other individuals and groups want education to emphasize the basics and be universal in its approach. There are other areas of conflict as well, particularly because education is so closely linked with political, economic, social, and other issues in our society. Many of these conflict areas overlap, which adds to the complexity of the demands on the public education system. Obviously, the government and Alberta Learning must handle these different groups and forces. Wagner (1998) pointed out that the Progressive Conservative government in Alberta "has been supportive of choice in education from the start" (p. 65). Although government is not known to take risks or fail with its goals (Chelinsky, 1987; Patton, 1987), it will search for opportunities which reflect its goals.

As noted, specifically from the business or corporate sector there are pressures on government to look at education as a venue for training the future citizens of our society (Livingstone & Hart, 1991). The workforce needs to be more skilled in technology and other technical areas. As Spring (1993) pointed out,

> sometimes the struggle for control of school operations is directly related to control over the type of knowledge disseminated at schools. Currently, the best example is the business community's extension of control over school operations through attempts to dominate local school boards, create local business and school compacts, establish adopt-a-school programs, and influence state and national policy statements. This attempt to control school operations is directly related to the business community's desire for the schools to disseminate knowledge that will give workers skills and attitudes needed by employers, and create a pro-business attitude. . . . Obviously, most businesses are not interested in the schools disseminating ideas that will foster unionism and demands for better working conditions and wages. (p. 26)

Many Albertans believe that the business sector has succeeded in influencing education curriculum and policy as seen in graduation requirements, technology and the Career and Technology curriculum, and other areas.

From a totally different perspective, decision makers, government in particular, feel the pressure of the media influencing the opinions of the public. Education has its fair share of being in the spotlight with changes to kindergarten programs, shootings in schools, funding cuts and needs, and other incidents. Regardless of what pressures, forces, or interest groups attempt to influence decisions made in education, there are many different professional, public, and media agendas at work (Fowler, 2000, p. 180), some working in harmony, others in opposition. Government also has its own agenda, which may or may not coincide with other agendas. Fowler (2000) also pointed out that there is competition between agendas and groups to get onto the governmental agenda. However, "for the most part, relatively powerless groups have little impact on the agenda setting" (p. 184).

As pressures increase for the government to make education operations and implementation effective and yet flexible, another category emerges related to centralized versus decentralized decision making and how this relationship of one to the other closes more doors to stakeholders in the end. For example, as the government strives for more ways to make access to education more flexible, the results are more private and charter schools, which puts into place more regulations and policies as provisions or legislations to the School Act (1988). This, in turn, increases formalization for centralized controls, authority, and funding. This too reduces the flexibility for other educational opportunities, including stakeholder involvement in central decision making processes. Even at the school level where decisions are supposedly made locally, the board must report on its plans and achievements. This is a hidden control and an accountability which is still centralized with Alberta Learning and the government.

Even decision makers claim that their accountability and assurance processes need work. The government or Alberta Learning conducts its own internal accountability surveys (annual satisfaction surveys) and writes its own reports. And although there is a three-year plan for education, there is no assessment of the effectiveness of the achievements or outcomes of these plans and no long-term impact analysis. It is therefore difficult for Alberta Learning to do proactive planning based only on annual satisfaction surveys designed with their own leading questions. One could critically argue that Alberta Learning has put into place a self-serving measure to ensure that any accountability rating will come out in its favor. This means that the values of decision makers are imposed on anything that is done in education or on any decisions that are made regarding curriculum and policy. Weiss (1980) contended that although "bureaucracies are unduly responsive to segmented special interests, more recent criticism contends that they are unresponsive to any thing beyond their own walls. Uncontrolled by political leaders, bureaucrats have become active players of the game of politics" (p. 12).

Some of the teachers claimed that because of Alberta Learning's short-sightedness in education, Alberta's education system is not on the cutting edge as the public has been led to believe. The Western Canadian partnership in education protocol for the sciences, language arts, and other academic programs has at least made education transferable. The choice in education, however, is virtually absent, with the core curriculum set by policy to meet the needs of individuals, society's demands, and the nature of knowledge (Reid, 1994). There is also the competition for students to meet the entrance requirements to postsecondary institutions as set out in the academic core curriculum and policy. In fact, CALM as a core curriculum has presented a scheduling dilemma for academic students. Although the perception is that CALM is an important course, the scheduling of CALM and other academic courses has presented challenges for academic students. Average or nonacademic students perceive choices to be even more challenging and, in fact, diminished in the public secondary school system. There are many fundamental questions to be asked here regarding the view of decision makers about choices in education and about education being accessible, universal, and open to every student. These concepts are part of the original *Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement* (Government of Alberta, 1985), and *The Three-Year Business Plans* (1998-2001; Alberta Education, 1998e), by which secondary education was and is mandated. Because Alberta Education also acknowledges the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) which "recognizes the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity" (p. 14), then choice and access to choices should be provided through public education. Obviously, the Alberta government has supported principles through making education more flexible and accessible, not necessarily through the public education system, but through charter or alternative schools. Therefore, if people feel that they do not have the choices they want in the public education system, the government has said that they have other choices available to them.

CALM: Pandora's Box

CALM is a core curriculum by Ministerial order. It is, however, viewed as a Pandora's Box: It has some good qualities and some problems. First of all, it has some important life skills components but also some controversial sexual health and other units. It is mandatory for graduation; however, it consists of soft skills and value-laden content which is difficult to measure. It is therefore in competition for scheduling with other core academic courses which have departmental examinations. CALM currently has no measuring stick and is not felt to be relevant to and by students. With these pros and cons, it is no wonder that some people have raised concerns and asked for a review or elimination of CALM from the Program of Studies (Aggleton, 1989). Other individuals continue to support CALM regardless of the challenges. According to community interest surveys as well as students, teachers, health professionals, and even decision makers, CALM needs revision. There are other challenges with CALM. Teachers also need inservice for CALM or university preparation. Resources are required to support the teaching and learning of CALM. Rural communities, in particular, face challenges in accessing resources to make CALM relevant and applicable to students, and for teachers to teach. In the long term the question remains as to whether or not a revision of the CALM curriculum will be adequate in meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. The concern is that if stakeholders are not involved in this revision or review process, dissatisfaction will continue.

Recommendations

Such concerns have led decision makers, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals to come up with recommendations similar to earlier ones coming out of the Secondary Education Policy Implementation Review Forum (Alberta Education, 1990). Only now are CALM and the policy which makes it mandatory for graduation part of the review equation. There are some key recommendations which link to the micro and macro considerations:

1. Decision makers in government and Alberta Learning need to 'consult' with stakeholders, including students, through different means. Government needs the partnership and support to make curriculum and policy changes successful. Theobald (1997) and Esbensen (1991) suggested that students need to participate in making decisions affecting their learning and education and that they should, as students, have the right to take part in education decisions. Cheung et al. (1996) suggested that students are stakeholders in education with legitimate power based on their experiences with life and with what the schools and education have to offer.

2. Decision makers need to communicate accurately and openly with the public and stakeholders. They need to establish trust with the public through open communication. As Fowler (2000) pointed out,

> First, good communication helps head off major political problems. A second reason for strong communication with stakeholders is that it empowers the validity and worth of the final evaluation. After all stakeholders are often closer to the grass-roots implementation than are the leaders and know more about it then they do. But what they will provide through information is only in a climate of trust. Moreover, as suggested earlier about implementation, multiple perspectives surround all policies and knowing what those perspectives are helpful. Leaders can discover them only through an interactive evaluation that involves much communication. (pp. 317-318)

From conventional methods of citizen involvement including consultations, meetings, surveys, and such, which do not attract people to want to participate. Higgins (1999) suggested that decision makers walk the talk and do "experiential participation" or go out to citizens to talk with them in their communities and observe their ideas. "This argues against a one-size-fits-all notion of participation and for opportunities that are developed in, and tailored to specific contexts and persons" (p. 32).

3. Government and Alberta Learning need to be accountable to the public and ensure that education is meeting the needs of students and the public. The purpose of education needs to be reviewed and highlighted regularly.

4. Government needs to be more proactive at planning and set long-range plans in place, as well as short-term goals. These plans need to include not only a mandate or Program of Studies with policies in place, but also teaching and learning resources and teacher in-service for courses such as CALM.

5. Government needs to support research on evaluating the effectiveness of education and processes. There needs to be a balance of opinions with facts. As Boyd (1989) pointed out,

"Research is now accumulating that penetrates the 'black box' of schooling and begins to reveal the key factors that make a difference, that make 'money matter'" (p. 245).

In summary, education and schools have always had a pronounced political context (Crump, 1992). The micro and macro considerations mentioned suggest that the education system is totally reactive to the internal and external pressures from many education stakeholders, interest groups, and business and other sectors, and to the political control of government and Alberta Learning (Curley, 1988; Linquist, 1991; Pross, 1986). The education system or "the enterprise of public schooling" (Mazurek, 1999, p. 4) is under constant scrutiny and faces the challenges of change as a result of changes in the political, social, cultural, economic, and other environmental contexts. The decisions for curriculum and policy changes are under the influence of all these human and other forces and agendas. Regardless of whether or not the balance of power is unequal and decision makers have the upper hand to make decisions (Apple, 1991; Coleman, 1990), education is still considered to be a partnership. Stakeholders support student consultation and involvement in curriculum and reform processes (Passé, 1996). The outcomes are meant to provide students with the best possible education (Bottery, 1992), and one that will satisfy the accountability and satisfaction ratings of the public and others impacted by the decisions. In the end, the curriculum and policy reform processes create the education system in Alberta, for better or for worse.

Completing the Framework: Recommendations and Decisions for Programs and Policies

There is a direct connection and overlap among the two issues and the three layers as a result of the themes emerging from the data. The framework is process driven and involves investigation from various angles related to programs and policies, stakeholder involvement, recommendations and decision making, and potential outcomes. It is applicable for analysis of specific programs and policies and includes the involvement of stakeholders and decision makers as part of the dynamic processes and discussions throughout. The process approach provides the means for encouraging researchers or practitioners to take the outcomes from the analysis and implement them (Berkhout & Wielemans, 1999):

> Without minimizing the importance of analysis of policy content, often developed to stimulate debate and dialogue about the policy, we argue that process consideration must also be included as components in a preferred model for policy analysis. A process approach to policy analysis pays more attention to who influences the development of policies, how action is generated, and who makes decisions. There are two important advantages to including such considerations in policy analysis. First, while these considerations do not guarantee an increased role for practitioners and service users, they

> focus attention on characteristics that encourage these questions to be raised. Policy analysis and policy-making from a process perspective are also understood as an ongoing set of activities that involves creating and adapting policies and programs. Thus, it is consistent with an approach that encourages ongoing inclusiveness and connections between practice and policy. Second, process questions such as who influences policy development and how policy provisions are implemented enable the use of policy analysis to influence the changes to particular policies or programs. (p. 53)

The conceptual program and policy analysis framework in this study can also be expanded from the information-gathering layers to the recommendations, or the decision-making phase. In other words, from each layer or construct recommendations or concepts can be extracted for further assessment and consideration. This could be considered as a summary step in the archeological process. Recommendations coming out of such an analysis may be general or very specific, and have been made by various stakeholders and decision makers for consideration. "Such recommendations are intended neither to romanticize student voices nor to give them unwarranted authenticity, but rather to acknowledge the validity of those and other voices in curriculum making" (Brooker & Macdonald, 1999, p. 95).

One final step can be taken with the recommendations which is specific to the decision-making process for program and policy analysis. In this conceptual archeological framework, once the information from the archeology framework is gathered and summarized, including recommendations, then a decision can be made, by decision makers independently or in consultation with other stakeholders, to do one of the following:

1. Reconsider to keep the existing program and policy as they are.
2. Reform or revise the program and policy, and include stakeholders.
3. Delete the program and related portions of the policy or entire policy.
4. Develop a new program and related portions of the policy or entire policy, and involve stakeholders.

In this way, the process involved in the examination of program, policy, and stakeholder involvement is an information-gathering and -sharing as well as decision-making exercise (Wharf & McKenzie, 1998). It may include, in addition to recommendations, some negotiation or even advocacy regarding a decision. In the end, the analysis process should make a contribution towards program and policy development or reform. Otherwise, the process and practice will remain disjointed, and like any evaluation or assessment outcomes from studies which are not used, they become useless activities and a waste of time and resources. Change, as reflected in the recommendations or decisions, will occur only if such intentions are made clear at the outset, particularly by decision makers. In addition, the aim of program and policy analysis is to provide decision makers with the information so that they can implement, or provide resources to others to implement, the changes (Gallagher, 1992). On the other hand,

> The failure of educational change may be related just as much to the fact that many innovations and reforms were never implemented in practice (i.e., real change was never accomplished) as to the fact that societal, political, and economic forces inhibit change within the educational system. (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 15)

In the case study, the decision was made to revise CALM, but to leave the policy intact in the business plans and graduation requirements. Although to date no final decisions have been made about the CALM pilot or further stakeholder involvement, other concerns also need to be addressed if CALM is to be successfully implemented in the future. These concerns include teacher in-service for CALM and resources for teachers and students.

Programs and policies will always remain vulnerable to scrutiny or complaints from stakeholders or clients (Weiss, 1987). This is an ongoing process for both program and policy decision makers, and one which should also be anticipated as part of reform processes every seven to ten years (Sabatier, 1986). It is also important to note that policies can be put into place to be instruments against public debate on certain programs or issues, or to "resist certain claims made by interest groups" (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997, p. 5) and essentially put closure on open debate and stakeholder input.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter presents a critical discussion and interpretation of the literature related to the core constructs and themes within a conceptual archeological framework which evolved from this study concerning program and policy analysis, development and reform, and stakeholder involvement in these decision-making processes. In this study specifically, the focus was on the CALM curriculum and the policy which made it mandatory for graduation, and stakeholder or student involvement in decisions concerning CALM and its related policy.

Each core construct and related categories were discussed as one of the interconnected layers within the proposed conceptual framework, identified as 'the issues,' 'discourses and practices,' 'alternatives and possibilities,' and 'micro and macro considerations.' The conceptual framework portrays the layers in an archeological fashion which uses historical and current experiences, perceptions, documents, and observations as the basis of the information for each layer. More accurately, the two issues form the parameters for the framework while the three other constructs are the layers. All are dependent and interconnected through the three major themes.

The program and policy archeology framework can provide decision makers with the recommendations for several decisions or outcomes for either programs or policies, or both. It is understood that stakeholder involvement will be a continuous thread for discussions throughout the framework and for decisions made.

Critical analysis, as applied in this case, provided the arguments and counter-arguments for three dominant themes of power relations, socio-political issues, and power/knowledge discourses. These are the forces at work within the case study of program (CALM) and policy analysis and reform, involving stakeholders (students). These dominant themes were discussed across all layers of the archeological framework.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

> Schools need more counselors and smaller class sizes if children at risk are to be more easily identified, local officials suggest. The task report on Children at Risk, released last week by Children's Services Minister Iris Evans, contains 49 wide-ranging recommendations to expand services for children so they can be accessed more readily. Among a host of recommendations relating to schools, the report said teachers should be trained to identify children at risk so they can be referred to the appropriate professionals. The consensus of school officials here is that those recommendations can't be put into action unless the province is willing to put more financial resources into education. . . . The report does call for improvements to government business planning and the budget process "to remove barriers and encourage government departments to work together." It also says there should be more stable and secure funding for community programs but doesn't specifically refer to schools. . . . Tibble said the government does not understand the manpower and the hours of work needed to "educate each child in the true sense of the word." "Do we need to wait for the next crises to initiate real change?" she asked. (Hanley, 2000, p. 1)

Overview

Education, politics, and social needs are all intertwined, which makes the processes for policy and program analysis, development, or reform difficult and complex. In addition, there are economic, cultural, and other forces which could influence the shaping and framing of goals and outcomes for programs and policies. The sociopolitical context has been a particularly nebulous challenge for decision making concerning programs and policies, essentially because of the differing opinions of government officials, education department staff, the public, and others perceived to be education stakeholders. Students fit into this picture somewhere, whether as stakeholders, consumers or recipients. Who decides who are the stakeholders? What are the processes for involving stakeholders such as students in decision-making concerning education curriculum and policy? Who decides these processes and how education programs and policies should be developed or reformed? These are some of the questions raised by people involved or interested in the analysis and reform of our public system, including education.

The decision-making processes concerning education programs and policies are also very complicated because of the identification of education needs, social needs, interest group needs, government needs, and other societal needs. Whose needs come first? Can they all be considered, and at what cost? The program and policy issues identified by government or any other stakeholders in education are very real issues affecting a number of individuals and groups. So, too, is the issue of who will be involved in consultations and decision-making processes concerning education programs and policies very real and of concern to all involved.

As a result, decision makers in government and Alberta Learning are being called on to remove the stigma of the "black box" image which exists for government departments and to make a conscious choice to have the voices and expertise of education stakeholders and the public involved, if not in the final decision-making processes, then at least in the analysis aspects of programs and policies. The lack of trust or the fear of being overwhelmed comes from both directions; thus the lack of democratic participation resulting from non-invitation or from apathy and skepticism. Where is the "democratic" in the political process? Because education is political in nature, decision makers and stakeholders would come into the curriculum and policy discussions with their own agendas, values, and ideas, and would want voice and choice. In the end, someone or some group will win, and others will lose; but the goal is to make the win one with which the majority can be satisfied in the long term.

It is important that the issues of curriculum and policy analysis, development, and reform, and stakeholder involvement in these decision-making processes, be known. It is also important that discourses and practices reflect the power, power/knowledge, truth, and ethical aspects of relationships and understandings, but that they also reflect what is involved in program and policy development and reform, including stakeholder involvement. Essentially, "practice what is preached," or "walk the talk." It is also important that alternatives and possibilities for curriculum and policy development and reform and stakeholder involvement be identified. Some alternatives and possibilities may turn out to be recommendations for consideration in decision making. Finally, it is important not to forget the other micro and macro factors or considerations which could impact on decision making and stakeholder involvement in program and policies.

This study has explored each of the areas of importance resulting from perceptions of decision makers, students, teachers, parents, and health professionals, as well as from documents, observations, and the literature. The result has been the evolution of an applied conceptual program and policy archeology framework which includes stakeholder involvement as a common issue and link throughout. The specific example explored in this study is the review of the CALM curriculum and the policy which makes it mandatory for graduation, and the involvement of students and others in curriculum and policy analysis, development, or reform processes.

Conclusions

The conclusions in this study are drawn from the general research questions posed at the outset, specifically for the education case focusing on program (CALM curriculum) and policy development and reform, and stakeholder (students and others) involvement. The research questions were:

What are the processes involved in curriculum (CALM) and policy reform, including stakeholder involvement?

What is the specific nature of the participation of students as stakeholders in education curriculum and policy reform?

What themes arising from the case study inform an archeological framework?

What recommendations and implications can be made concerning program and policy reform and stakeholder involvement?

The application of these or similar research questions to different cases in education, health, or social services could present with similar or different conclusions. In this case the research questions were answered through the data gathering and analysis, and in the development of the conceptual archeological framework to which critical analysis discussions have been applied.

The Development of a Conceptual Archeological Framework

Besides specific answers to questions, the study data presented constructs and categories, and major themes supporting the development of a conceptual archeological framework as one which has dependent and interconnecting layers. The four layers or constructs in this framework are "the issues," "discourses and practices," "alternatives and possibilities," and "micro and macro considerations." In addition, the framework offers the researcher the opportunity to expand the study with recommendations and program and policy decisions. The framework, although labeled "Program and Policy Archeology," includes stakeholder involvement as an issue identified in this particular study and as a common link between all the layers. Without the discussion of stakeholder involvement in each layer, the framework would be missing the one common link needed to make it an effective applied tool for program and policy studies or analysis.

The findings and literature provided the fundamental supports for the conclusions drawn and the framework developed. Foucault and other critical theorists and analysts were referenced in the discussion, including topics such as power relations and authorities, truths, emancipation and democratic participation, and schools as panopticons. The literature, however, did not have much to offer regarding student involvement in education curriculum and policy development and reform processes. The literature focused more on decision makers in the government or sub-government strata of the policy community and less on the other public or community stakeholders. The process of stakeholder involvement in program and policy analysis or development or reform decision-making processes is virtually absent in the literature, except under "interest groups" or "pressure groups." However, this study, the research, and the framework can be a guide to others who are also interested in program and policy analysis and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes for development or reform of programs and policies. It can also be used to follow the processes and involvement of marginalized groups in society, and students may be viewed as one such group.

Implications

There are a number of implications which can be drawn from this research. The findings have implications for researchers of policy studies, program and policy analysts, decision makers in government or government departments, and stakeholder advocacy.

Implications for Researchers

There are many different directions which researchers in policy studies, education curriculum, or program developers could pursue. There are also some insights to consider.

1. Research has a strong role to play in policy studies in defining agendas, issues or problems, alternatives, and even solutions. It also plays a role in looking at unique designs for analysis of not only policy but also the interrelationship between programs and policies and between the various issues for programs and policies such as stakeholder involvement in reviews, development, reform, decision-making processes, and so on. The researcher is able to define the research to expand studies beyond the "policy box" and to apply designs which take academic studies into the applied arena. This also includes looking at the relationships among policies, programs, stakeholders, and other aspects more closely and critically.

2. Research in education and other public services or programs, such as health or social services is politically oriented and driven. It is also value laden. There are many debatable aspects to programs and policies for education, health, and social services. It is important for researchers to consider the different perspectives from decision makers and other stakeholders when reviewing specific programs and services. The research often takes only one perspective, but misses out on the others or a combination of perspectives. The broader perspective makes for a richer outcome, taking into account the possible contradictions, paradoxes, and agreements or compromises that come from different perspectives (Boyd, 1999).

3. Research in policy studies also needs an historical perspective as much as it does a contemporary one. History provides a context for why the policy and any related programs have been identified as problems. There are social, cultural, economic, and political causes for program and policy development grounded. This historical perspective is especially important for understanding decision-making processes for policy and programs which have an impact on the public, including for particular attitudes, beliefs, actions or practices, and decisions made.

4. Research provides an avenue for reviewing frameworks and models derived from in other studies. The archeological framework in this study also needed to be applied and critiqued in other studies in education, health, or social services. If researchers are interested in program and policy analysis or in stakeholder involvement in the development and reform processes of programs and policies, then they may turn to this framework as a potential starting point.

5. This study assumed many things which need to be challenged, particularly the relationship among programs, policies, and stakeholder involvement. One premise is that policies are created as reactions to public or other political needs, and programs are developed to achieve the goals set out or identified in the policies. However, many programs are developed outside the scope of policies, and are included after the fact. Of course, neither policies nor programs are developed without some stakeholder involvement including decision makers.

Implications for Program and Policy Analysts

Many of the same insights and considerations described for researchers of policy studies are also implications for program and policy analysts. Analysis of programs and policies as a combined effort is as important as analysis of only programs or of only policies, separate from each other. Analysts, like researchers, have a key role in assessing the issues, past and current contexts, alternatives, decisions, and stakeholders in programs and policies as they are developed, implemented, and reviewed every seven to ten years or so. Analysts will need to consider different perspectives of decision makers and stakeholders when analyzing the programs and policies, and they will probably follow an analysis framework or model to guide the process.

There are basic assumptions that programs (as clusters of policy instruments) and policies (as constituent elements of program practices) are two separate things, which when evaluated are considered to be evaluated separately as well. However, what often affects programs could affect policies, and vice versa. As analysts, it becomes logical to consider evaluating or analyzing both the programs and their related policies together to ensure that there are compatible realities for both under the existing political, social, and economic conditions and environment. My framework encouraged the analysis of programs and policies in parallel, and with consideration for stakeholders and their involvement, as well as other factors. The program and policy archeology framework was a feasible instrument.

Implications for Decision Makers of Policies and Programs

Decision makers of policies and programs have a difficult role to play, regardless of whether they are with government, ministry departments, boards, councils, or organizations. Outcomes from the decisions made will affect many people, as well as other departments, groups, or organizations. The question is, "How do decision makers do the right and correct thing and make the right and correct decisions for policies and programs which will be satisfactory to the majority of stakeholders, interest groups, and the public?" The process involved in making decisions is a complex one and is often faced with time constraints, political agendas, and other factors. There are, however, some insights and suggestions from this study which could be of value to decisions makers:

1. It is important that decision makers see program and policy analysis as an interrelated process involving stakeholders, some of whom may be students or marginalized groups. There are other social, economic, cultural, and political aspects to consider outside of the "black box" of bureaucracies. It is also important, therefore, for decision makers to be open and flexible in their approaches to gathering information about the programs and policies and what needs to change according to the perspectives of many and not just the deciding or elite few. Democratic participation should be the focus of decision makers for policy and program analysis and reform processes, as difficult or challenging as this process may be.

It is important that decision makers have some guide or framework to make their task easier. Such a framework could exist in the one developed in this study for program and policy analysis and stakeholder involvement. There are many different models for policy analysis, but I am unaware of any that combine program and policy analysis. In this study, the CALM program was reviewed, and linked to the policy which made it mandatory for graduation. The review actually affects both CALM programming and its related policy framework. Decisions may affect either one or both in the end. The framework provides guidance in following through the issues, practices and discourses, alternatives, and other considerations, along with the stakeholders who have the most to gain or lose from reform of programs and policies. The end goal is that informed and well-thought-out decisions can be made regarding the best course of action for programs and policies. Ultimately, in education as in other public services, there is an interrelationship between the mission, vision, goals, policies and programs, and, of course, the stakeholders, including decision makers and consumers (Meenaghan & Kilty, 1994). A framework can help to shape the various perspectives on these interrelations and not to lose sight of them.

2. Decision makers should gather information from different sources, and assessing different sources of perspectives, research, and documents. This assessment should include different value agendas and perspectives of program and policy actors and of stakeholders, including recipients or consumers. Because decision makers in government departments and in politics have enthusiastically supported the "ideal" of consultation (democratic participation) for the development and reform of programs and policies, then they should take the opportunity to put the ideal into practice. The consultation process need not and should not be separate from the policy-making or program-making processes. Despite the pressures to separate the consultation from the policy and program processes, decision makers should realize that in the long term the consultation process will prevent the same or other similar issues or problems from surfacing later on. Certainly not all issues will be addressed even through consultation. The consultation process is fundamentally linked to the decision-making processes for programs and policies. As Montgomerie (1994) stated, "Senior administrators must champion the importance of public consultation in the formulation of effective policy" (p. 164).

This study points out that decision makers must learn to see the advantages of stakeholder consultation in decision-making processes as effective practices. In order for this happen, there need to be some changes in the attitudes toward the ways in which decision makers conduct the processes which ultimately affect the decisions made and the outcomes. Maybe policies are required for the way in which these processes are implemented and the way in which decisions are made. Stakeholders or consultation processes need to be included. And the culture of Alberta Education and other departments needs to change to be accepting and accommodating of the consultation process. Effective relationships and support for programs and policies are built through effective consultation and negotiation for what works best for most people.

3. Decision makers must realize that decisions regarding programs and policy and their outcomes will have an impact on the implementation of these programs and acceptance of or even compliance with the policies. As with this study regarding CALM and its related policy, many issues have emerged from different stakeholders. Not only is consultation important in defining and resolving the issues, but so is research on the program and policy and why they are difficult to implement. Decision makers should rely on research which can effectively gather different sources of data and perspectives and summarize the findings for decision makers. Using a program and policy archeological framework can help to guide the process with resulting recommendations to inform, reform, develop, delete, or remain with the status quo. Again, it is

important that decision makers weigh the advantages of doing research which would provide more solid answers for programs and policies than politically expedient decision making (Johnson, 1999).

Implications for Stakeholders and Advocacy

The primary focus of this study is on stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes for program and policy. Essentially, programs and policies are developed to respond in some way to the needs of the public and stakeholders with common interests. For the democratic ideal to hold true, stakeholders should be involved in the development of programs and policies which will affect them, as much as in the implementation, evaluations, and reformulation of them. The problem is, of course, that the perception from stakeholders or the public is that policy makers and program developers do all the work and do not invite them to participate and that the stakeholders end up evaluating, assessing, or criticizing the outcomes. Stakeholders believe that they should be invited by the decision makers to take part in the decision-making processes for policy and program, whereas the decision makers believe stakeholders can proactively participate in program and policy evaluation and reform processes, but not necessarily in the development or reform decision-making processes. The questions are, "Who decides who will be involved in program and policy development and reform decision-making processes?" and "How should consultation happen?" There are implications for democratic advocacy.

1. Stakeholders need to realize that programs and policies are developed to respond to and meet their needs in education, health, economics, or other areas of concern. To inquire about programs and policies which could affect them is their democratic right, and to gain an understanding of the policies and programs that affect them should be as natural as their inquiry about the world around them (Meenaghan & Kilty, 1999), particularly because policies and programs affect the public and private aspects of one's life. Program and policy reform do not operate in a vacuum, which makes it more critical for the public and stakeholders with common interests to take part in decision making practices.

Therefore, it is important that stakeholders and the public be proactive in gaining information from government and the various government departments about changes in plans, programs, policies, and consultation processes; as well as in taking part by writing letters to MLAs, calling the Alberta Education Department, and participating in local school, community, and other meetings. For education, stakeholders can call the teachers and administrators at schools, school boards through School Councils, and school district officials to contact regarding information and participation. At the provincial level, it becomes more difficult for stakeholders to participate, but the MLAs will listen and pass on comments to the Minister or Premier. It appears that the concerns of parents, teachers, students, and others about CALM and its related policy reached the decision makers in government and Alberta Education. This was said to be one of several reasons why CALM was reviewed.

2. Students also have some choices. They can also contact MLAs or Alberta Education, or work with parents, teachers, and School Councils to try to provide input on CALM or other curricula and policies to the decision makers. But students know, as do others, that they must work in partnership with other stakeholders to be heard. They need to seek advocates to carry their voices if they do not feel that their voices will be heard or that they can make a difference in decision-making processes concerning programs and policies. Students also have access to technology which will allow them to provide direct feedback on courses to Alberta Education. As individuals, students will rarely be heard by decision makers; but as a large organized group, they cannot be ignored. But students must want to be involved and want to make a difference. For those who do not care to become involved, it will not make any difference, and they will have to accept the consequences or outcomes or complain after the fact.

Advocating for a democratic process is difficult for students who are really only learning the process as voters at the age of 18. Students should understand that only through consultation, their serious and active involvement, and their own education, can democratic participation take place. It should take place if the public wishes to determine public policies and programs that will affect them, their education, and other services such as those in health or social services.

3. For advocacy there are many implications. Generally, for the consultation process in policy and program development and reform, advocacy for stakeholder involvement and collaboration with decision makers should be part of the issues and the entire process. This should be encouraged with decision makers who have supported the consultation process, at least in theory and discourse. The best way to encourage consultation, stakeholder involvement, and collaboration is to have it as part of the framework for policy analysis or, as in this study, for program and policy analysis. Advocacy for consultation and stakeholder involvement needs to be highlighted at meetings, committees, conversations with MLAs and staff at Alberta Education, and through any other means available to the public. For Gitlin (1999), collaboration, from a political perspective,

> is about the realignment of relations of power and the articulation of a specified form of change. . . . Collaboration, in the more common view, is about working within the confines of established relations of power and making unspecified improvements in schooling. (p. 633)

On the other hand, collaboration could also be viewed "as educational 'good' that can play an important part in furthering school reform" (p. 630). Through the sharing of information from this study, the researcher hopes that the message will be one of advocacy for public consultation, stakeholder involvement, and collaboration on program and policy development and reform decision-making processes.

Ending Note

In the end, what everyone, including decision makers, wants is to have a say in what constitutes the programs and policies which will affect their lives, whether in education, health, or other public sectors. Why cannot people with a vested interest be involved? The time is approaching to advocate for leadership that supports collaboration and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes. Elected representation is seen as only part of the decision-making process; the other is democratic participation. The public must become more proactive in ensuring that participation stays in democracy.

However, as Bob Rae (1999) so eloquently pointed out:

> The public has a great deal of difficulty becoming engaged in areas where they don't see choices, and we have to find more and more places where Canadians can discuss what the choices actually are. This is not just a matter of people demanding more of their special interests, it involves looking at the tradeoffs and compromises required. The first step is for us to recognize that there is a great deal of consensus across the country on what needs to be done. There is a surprising amount of agreement on the general area of reform, and we have to flesh that out before we can act on it. We have to give the public a chance to really participate and get involved. (p. 103)

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APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Career and Life Management 20 (CALM 20) is a core course required by all Alberta high school students for graduation. The course provides students with the opportunity of developing thinking and communicating skills and learning how to deal with feelings effectively will provide a basis for building life skills and improving relationships with others. Students will appreciate and understand how careers, relationships, well-being, and finance affect their lives. Through an increased awareness of self the student will be able to contribute more positively to the well-being of others (Draft, Career and Life Management [Senior High], May 17, 1993).

Policy has been defined in different ways. For the purposes of this study, policy refers to practices, guidelines, mandatory directives, or official enactments; and includes legislation, policies as named, programs of studies, and other documents approved and distributed by the Minister of Education. Specific examples are the Alberta School Act (1970; revised 1988), the Secondary Education in Alberta Policy Statement (1986), and the Controversial Issues Policy (Policy Manual, 1996).

Policy making, used synonymously with *policy formulation*, or with *policy reform/reformulation if policy is being revised*, is a decision-making process involving selected stakeholders or actors who will be utilizing information about identified problems and issues to determine alternative solutions for these problems.

Stakeholders is a term often used synonymously with "key actors" in policy-making and implementation processes. Some may be change agents; some not. The stakeholders differ from issue to issue but often include government department officials who usually play a major role in policy making, other policy makers, school trustees, implementers who are often the principals and teachers, students who are the recipients of the policy, and parents as well as other public groups.

Policy analysis is "an applied social science discipline which use[s] multiple methods and argument to produce and transform policy-relevant information that may be utilized in political settings to resolve policy problems" (Dunn, 1981, p. 35). It is synonymous with problem solving, in which information is gathered to make informed decisions or judgements about solutions to practical problems (Gallagher, 1992). *Policy archeology* is a specific type of policy analysis which "studies the social construction of [problems which have emerged into social visibility]" (Scheurich, 1994, p. 297). It is a radically different approach to policy analysis in that it defines problems and problem issues, along with their related policies and policy alternatives, in the context of social orders. Scheurich spoke of "grids or networks" of *social regularities*

> that are constitutive of the emergence or social construction of a particular problem as a social problem, regularities that constitute what is labeled as a problem and what is not labeled as a problem. These grids, also, constitute the range of acceptable policy choices. (p. 98)

Archeology, from Foucault's (1972) perspective, is an analysis of a "different history of what men have said" (p. 138), rather than a history of ideas. The divergence between the archeological analysis and the history of ideas concerns how people view themselves in the context of "the attribution of innovation, the analysis of contradictions, comparative descriptions, and the mapping of transformations" (p. 138).

> Man is both the subject and the object of the discourses. . . . The root of the problem is that in the modern episteme man appears in his ambiguous position as object of knowledge and as a subject that knows: enslaved sovereign, observed spectator. (Simons, 1995, p. 24)

Democracy or *democratic process* in this study refers to participatory democracy, which contends that Albertans have the right to participate in, express opinions about, and vote on matters which could have an impact on their rights and those of their children. "People on a local level take part in making decisions about issues that affect their lives" (Kohl, 1992, p. 202).

Discourse is the central concept in Foucault's analytical framework.

> Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations. . . . Thus the possibilities for meaning and for definition are preempted through the social and institutional position held by those who use them. Meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations. Words and concepts change their meaning and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses. Discourses constrain the possibilities of thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations. However, in so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationship to other discourses, other possibilities of meaning, other claims, rights, and positions. (Ball, 1990, p. 2)

Knowledge/power is a combination term used by Foucault to stress that "power relations and scientific discourses mutually constitute one another" (Simons, 1995, p. 27), in a social world that is both knowledgeable and governable in an interdependent fashion. However, Foucault was not inclined to bear the thesis that "knowledge is power" or that "power is knowledge" (Kuitzman, 1988, p. 43).

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS

(GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, ALBERTA EDUCATION BUREAUCRAT, OTHERS)

The following questions will be used as a basis for the interview with you in your current or past role as decision maker in Alberta's education system. Additional questions may emerge as part of the discussion.

1. In your opinion, is it important for students to be actively involved in the education curriculum and/or policy development and reform processes? Why or why not? Please discuss in general terms, and then with regards to the CALM review process if at all possible.
2. How do you perceive students fitting into the review and decision-making processes concerning curriculum and policy development and/or reform? That is, how would you describe the role which students play in the review and decision-making processes concerning curriculum and policy development and reform, and more specifically concerning the Health and CALM program? How would you describe students' voice and choice in decision-making processes in their education?
3. What is your understanding of how students perceive their roles in the education curriculum and policy development and reform processes?
4. What value do government officials and decision makers place on the involvement of students in curriculum and/or policy development and reform processes? What are the perceived benefits, if any, of student involvement in these processes?
5. Are students considered to be "stakeholders" in education curriculum and policy development and reform in Alberta? Why or why not?
6. How have students been involved in the Health and CALM review processes? If students have been involved, of what value to government was their involvement in the review processes?
7. What is the perceived and actual relationship between successful outcomes for curriculum and/or policy reform, and student involvement in the processes? How are purpose and relevancy of curriculum linked with student participation?
8. How have you or other government officials and decision makers utilized students in the past or present for curriculum and policy development and reform? What changes, if any, need to be made for student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform?
9. What if anything prevents government officials and decision makers from involving students in education curriculum and policy development and reform?
10. If not students, who do government officials/decision makers perceive as being important participants in deciding what is important for the curriculum, like Health and CALM, and for education policy reform?
11. What other influences or influential factors do government officials and decision makers perceive as important for achieving the outcomes of curriculum (e.g., Health and CALM), and policy reform?
12. How would you describe the relationship which exists between government officials/decision makers and students? That is, what kind of relationship exists between government officials/decision makers and students? What changes, if any, should occur with this existing relationship to improve communications?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS (HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ALUMNI)

Need to clarify students' understanding of curriculum and policy, and who develops these before proceeding with following questions:

1. Do you believe that students should be involved with government, teachers, and others in education curriculum development and reform processes? Why or why not?
2. How would you describe the role of students in curriculum and policy development and reform?
3. How do you believe students can contribute to the education curriculum and/or policy development and reform processes?
    a. What can students contribute to education curriculum and policy development and reform processes?
    b. In what ways or how are students capable of and given the opportunity to participate and contribute to the curriculum and/or policy development and reform processes?
    c. Are you aware of examples illustrating student contributions/participation in curriculum and/or policy development and reform? Elaborate on examples.
    d. Specifically related to the CALM program, including health, how have students been involved in past and present development and review processes? How have students been acknowledged for their contributions or willingness to contribute?
4. What are students' perceptions of the roles of parents, teachers, school administrators, and government officials/decision makers in selecting curriculum and developing policies which affect students' lives?
5. What value do students place on the curriculum, like the CALM and health components, and/or policy reform processes to ensure that students' needs are being met?
6. Do students view themselves as "stakeholders" in the education curriculum and policy development and reform processes? Why/why not? (can elaborate with reference to the CALM program).
    a. Who should be stakeholders and therefore have a say or be able to participate in education curriculum and/or policy development and reform?
    b. How does student voice and choice play a part in education reform in Alberta?
7. The CALM and Health programs are currently under review for possible elimination from the high school curriculum, and the Alberta Secondary High School Policy Statement which states that CALM is mandatory for graduation will also have to reviewed accordingly. What do students perceive as important in the CALM curriculum and related policy reform processes and outcomes? What should student involvement be in these processes? In what way have students participated in the current decision to review CALM and its related policy component to possibly eliminate them from the curriculum? Are you aware of students participating on any committees for reviews, curriculum revisions, policy decision making, Policy Standing Committee, or other?
8. What will be the impact on students in Alberta if Alberta Education decides to eliminate the CALM program from the Alberta High School curriculum? How important is this impact to students? How important is your input in the decision to keep or eliminate CALM and Health, or in the decisions around other curriculum and policies?

9. What is the relationship between successful outcomes for curriculum or policy reform, and student involvement in these processes? How are purpose and relevancy of curriculum and policy linked with student participation?
10. What is your understanding of the relationship between students and government officials/decision makers in the education reform processes?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS WITH PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

For focus groups or interviews with parents, teachers, or health professionals, who are in direct contact with students on a daily or regular basis, the following questions are posed to guide the discussion:

1. How do you perceive your current role in working with or guiding students through the education curriculum? (Can use CALM and health programs as example).
2. Do you consider yourselves as stakeholders in education curriculum and policy development and reform processes? If yes, explain how, why or in what ways.
3. Do you consider students, specifically high school students, to be stakeholders in education curriculum and policy development and reform processes? Why or why not? Explain. What about in the CALM and Health review processes?
4. What is your understanding of how students have been involved in curriculum and policy development and reform processes? How have students had a voice and a choice in these development and reform processes?
5. From your understanding, how are relevancy and purpose of curriculum and policy linked with student participation in any decision making processes?
6. If students are not involved in the curriculum and policy development and reform processes, who are their representatives to speak on their behalf? Is this adequate?
7. Can you perceive any limitations or reasons for students not being involved in the education curriculum and policy reform processes? with government, teachers, parents, health professionals, or others? (apply this to the CALM and health program review processes).
8. What to your knowledge has been the extent of student participation/involvement in the curriculum review processes, like CALM and health? What have students said about their education and curriculum? How would students like to be involved with the curriculum and policy reform processes?
9. What will be the impact on students if Alberta Education decides to eliminate CALM and health from the Alberta High School curriculum?
10. What is your understanding of the relationship between students and government official/decision makers regarding curriculum and policy decisions?
11. What, if anything, could be done differently to improve the opportunities of direct student involvement in education curriculum and policy reform processes in Alberta? What would your role be in this process? What impact would there be, if any, on your roles if students had more involvement in the education reform processes? Are there other potential impacts?
12. Other general and specific comments on student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform processes in Alberta. Specific reference can be made to the CALM and health curriculum and related policy.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION, LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS

EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PROGRAM AND POLICY ANALYSIS AND REFORM: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Ph.D. Study by

Katharina Kovacs Burns

Description of Research Project

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the nature of student involvement in education curriculum and policy development and reform. The specific example assessed as part of this study is the Alberta high school Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum review. The nature of student involvement will be studied through the perceptions and understandings obtained from government officials or decision makers and students specifically, and parents, teachers, and health professionals more generally as a result of their direct involvement with students. These perceptions should provide relevant insights into (a) the type and extent of student involvement in the curriculum and policy development and reform processes, as with the CALM program; (b) the relationship between policy decision makers and government officials in Alberta Education, and students; (c) the aspect of whether or not students are considered "stakeholders" in education curriculum and policy; (d) the understandings of social norms and dominant relations or preferences which either support or inhibit student participation in curriculum and policy development and reform processes; and (e) the specific orientation of government which might limit or contribute to student involvement. The intention of this study is to identify a set of issues which could result in the development of a framework or model for understanding the role or involvement of students in specific education reform processes in Alberta.

Study Design

Qualitative research will be conducted out of which themes and issues will be identified. An archeological approach will be used in the gathering, analysis and discussion of the data collected from interviews, focus groups, documents, and other sources. The archeological approach provides the flexibility to examine and compare past and present experiences and perspectives, as well as arguments and counter-arguments regarding student involvement in education curriculum and policy development and reform, specifically concerning health and CALM programs.

Sixty- to 90-minute interviews will be conducted with government officials and decision makers, specifically within Alberta Education. Individuals will include those currently in office as well as some who have retired. Interviews will also be conducted with additional individuals as recommended by interviewees and others, such as Curriculum Consultants with School Districts. Focus groups are planned with two of each group of urban and rural high school students and alumni students either currently attending the University of Alberta or in other groups. Other focus groups are proposed with teachers, parents, and health professionals (specifically public health nurses), who are in close contact with high school students regarding the CALM program. Only those individuals who consent to participate will be involved in the study. Questions will be circulated to participants prior to the interviews or focus groups. All sessions will be audio taped unless otherwise noted through consent or discussion. Transcripts of the audio taped sessions will be reviewed with participants prior to use in any way. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured to participants throughout all phases of their involvement in the study. Only themes and issues will be discussed in the thesis as a basis of understanding student involvement in the processes of curriculum and policy development and reform.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

(Interviews with Decision Makers: Government, Alberta Education, Retired, Curriculum Consultants)

September, 1998

Dear Participant:

My name is Kathy Kovacs-Burns. I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting research on the involvement of Alberta high school students in education curriculum and policy development and reform, specifically involving the Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum review process.

The purpose of this study is to critically explore and examine the perspectives and understandings of government officials at Alberta Education and students, regarding student involvement or participation in education curriculum and policy development and reform. Teachers, parents, and health professionals who are in close contact with students, particularly with the CALM program, will also be involved in focus groups. The data will be assessed for themes and issues which hopefully can lead to the development of a framework depicting student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform and any influencing sociopolitical factors.

As one part of this study, interviews of 60 – 90 minutes are being requested from government officials, decision makers at Alberta Education, and Curriculum Consultants for School Districts. It is estimated that 12 – 15 interviews will be conducted in total. Questions for these sessions can be provided in advance. All sessions will be audio taped, with your consent. The tapes will be transcribed for use in the study, both of which will be destroyed upon my convocation when all requirements for graduation have been satisfied. All aspects of your participation will be kept confidential and anonymous. We ask that the rights of others in the focus group be respected by the participants as well. You will have the right to withdraw from the study or from answering any questions during the focus group session. Any themes derived from the transcribed focus sessions will not reveal school districts, schools, or participants. Only private discussions with my supervisor may contain reference to schools or school districts. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis and oral examination, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal papers, and book chapters. If you have any questions or concerns about the process at any time, you can contact the researcher (Hm. 973-6387; Wk. 423-1232), or the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey (University of Alberta, 492-7609).

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and complete the attached form. Please print your name, sign and date the form in the provided spaces, and return it to me at the University of Alberta, Educational Policy Studies, or as arranged.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Kathy Kovacs-Burns

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED

ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of this letter with regards to the proposed study. I understand that

1. My name or the name of the institution I am affiliated with will not be mentioned or referenced in any written materials or presentations;

2. Everything I say will be kept confidential and anonymous;

3. Themes and concepts will be taken from the transcribed discussions without specific reference to me or other participants, schools, school districts, or institutions;

4. Themes, concepts and issues will be used in the researcher's PhD Thesis, oral examination and final reports for participants, as well as in the future for presentations at conferences or other venues, journal articles/publications, and book chapters;

5. Although the discussion will be audio taped and transcribed, these will be destroyed upon the satisfactory completion of all requirements for the researcher's graduation;

6. I can withdraw from the discussion or answering a question at any time;

7. I can contact the researcher or her supervisor if I have any concerns or questions regarding the process.

I have read and understand the processes and conditions for participating in this interview and I,

____ *(please print your name)*, give permission to Kathy Kovacs-Burns to include me in the research project as described.

____
Signature

____
Date

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

(Focus Groups and Interviews: High School Students and Alumni)

January, 1999

Dear Participant:

RE: Curriculum and Policy Reform: Student Participation

My name is Kathy Kovacs-Burns. I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting research on the involvement of Alberta high school students in education curriculum and policy development and reform, specifically involving the Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum review process.

The purpose of this study is to critically explore and examine the perspectives and understandings of government officials at Alberta Education and students, regarding student involvement or participation in education curriculum and policy development and reform. Teachers, parents, and health professionals who are in close contact with students, particularly with the CALM program, will also be involved in focus groups. The data will be assessed for themes and issues which hopefully can lead to the development of a framework depicting student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform and any influencing sociopolitical factors.

As one part of this study, focus group sessions of 60 – 90 minutes are being requested from students, as well as teachers, parents, and health professionals. It is estimated that nine focus group sessions will be conducted, six with students, and one each with teachers, parents, and health professionals. Questions for these sessions can be provided in advance. All sessions will be audio taped, with your consent. The tapes will be transcribed for use in the study, both of which will be stored in a secure place accessible by only the research team for a period of seven years (University Policy and Procedures). All aspects of your participation will be kept confidential except when professional codes of ethics and/or legislation require reporting. We ask that the rights of others in the focus group be respected by the participants as well. You will have the right to withdraw from the study or from answering any questions during the focus group session. Any themes derived from the transcribed focus sessions will not reveal school districts, schools, or participants. Only private discussions with my supervisor may contain reference to schools or school districts. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis and oral examination, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal papers, and book chapters. If you have any questions or concerns about the process at any time, you can contact the researcher (Hm. 973 – 6387; Wk. 423 – 1232), the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey (University of Alberta, 492 – 7609), or the Graduate Studies Coordinator, Dr. Beth Young (492 – 7617).

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and complete the attached form, along with a witness and myself. There will be two copies of this letter and form, of which a set will be yours for future reference.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Kathy Kovacs-Burns

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED

ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and consent form with regards to the proposed study. I understand that

1. My name or the name of the institution I am affiliated with will not be mentioned or referenced in any written materials or presentations;

2. Everything I say will be kept confidential except when professional codes of ethics and/or legislation require reporting;

3. Themes and concepts will be taken from the transcribed discussions without reference to any participants, schools, school districts, or institutions;

4. Themes, concepts and issues will be used in the researcher's PhD Thesis, oral examination and final reports for participants, as well as in the future for presentations at conferences or other venues, journal articles/publications, and book chapters;

5. The discussion will be audio taped and transcribed, both of which will be stored in a secure place accessible to the research team for a period of seven years (University Policy and Procedures);

6. I can withdraw from the discussion or answering a question at any time;

7. I can contact the researcher or her supervisor if I have any concerns or questions regarding the process.

I have read and understand the processes and conditions for participating in this research focus group and I,

____ *(please print your name)*, give permission to Kathy Kovacs-Burns to include me in the research project as described.

______________________________ Signature of Participant	________________ Date
______________________________ Printed name & Signature of Witness (where applicable)	________________ Date
______________________________ Signature of Investigator (Kathy Kovacs- Burns)	________________ Date

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

(Parents of High School Students)

September, 1998

Dear Participant:

My name is Kathy Kovacs-Burns. I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting research on the involvement of Alberta high school students in education curriculum and policy development and reform, specifically involving the Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum review process.

The purpose of this study is to critically explore and examine the perspectives and understandings of government officials at Alberta Education and students, regarding student involvement or participation in education curriculum and policy development and reform. Teachers, parents, and health professionals who are in close contact with students, particularly with the CALM program, will also be involved in focus groups. The data will be assessed for themes and issues which hopefully can lead to the development of a framework depicting student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform and any influencing sociopolitical factors.

As one part of this study, focus group sessions of 60 – 90 minutes are being requested from students, as well as teachers, parents, and health professionals. It is estimated that nine focus group sessions will be conducted, six with students, and one each with teachers, parents, and health professionals. Questions for these sessions can be provided in advance. All sessions will be audio taped, with your consent. The tapes will be transcribed for use in the study, both of which will be destroyed upon my convocation when all requirements for graduation have been satisfied. All aspects of the student's participation will be kept confidential and anonymous. We ask that the rights of others in the focus group be respected by the participants as well. The student will have the right to withdraw from the study or from answering any questions during the focus group session. Any themes derived from the transcribed focus sessions will not reveal school districts, schools, or participants. Only private discussions with my supervisor may contain reference to schools or school districts. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis and oral examination, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal papers, and book chapters. If you or your child have any questions or concerns about the process at any time, you can contact the researcher (Hm. 973 – 6387; Wk. 423 – 1232), or the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey (University of Alberta, 492 – 7609).

If you are willing to have your son or daughter participate in this study, please read and complete the attached form. Please print your name and the name of your child, sign and date the form in the provided spaces, and return it to me at the University of Alberta, Educational Policy Studies, or as arranged.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Kathy Kovacs-Burns

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED

ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of this letter with regards to the proposed study. I understand that

1. My son/daughter's name or the name of the school and school district will not be mentioned or referenced in any written materials or presentations;
2. Everything my child says will be kept confidential and anonymous;
3. Themes and concepts will be taken from the transcribed discussions without reference to any participants, schools, school districts, or institutions;
4. Themes, concepts and issues will be used in the researcher's PhD Thesis, oral examination and final reports for participants, as well as in the future for presentations at conferences or other venues, journal articles/publications, and book chapters;
5. Although the discussion will be audio taped and transcribed, these will be destroyed upon the satisfactory completion of all requirements for the researcher's graduation;
6. My child can withdraw from the discussion or answering a question at any time;
7. I or my child can contact the researcher or her supervisor if I/we have any concerns or questions regarding the process.

I have read and understand the processes and conditions for my child's participation in this research focus group and I,

____ *(please print your name)*, give permission to Kathy Kovacs-Burns to include my son/daughter (Printed Name: ______________________) in the research project as described.

____ ______________________

Parent Signature Date

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

(Focus Groups and Interviews: Teachers, Parents, and Health Professionals)

January 1999

Dear Participant:

RE: Curriculum and Policy Reform: Student Participation

My name is Kathy Kovacs-Burns. I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting research on the involvement of Alberta high school students in education curriculum and policy development and reform, specifically involving the Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum review process.

The purpose of this study is to critically explore and examine the perspectives and understandings of government officials at Alberta Education and students, regarding student involvement or participation in education curriculum and policy development and reform. Teachers, parents, and health professionals who are in close contact with students, particularly with the CALM program, will also be involved in focus groups. The data will be assessed for themes and issues which hopefully can lead to the development of a framework depicting student involvement in curriculum and policy development and reform and any influencing sociopolitical factors.

As one part of this study, focus group sessions of 60 – 90 minutes are being requested from teachers, parents, and health professionals, in addition to students. It is estimated that nine focus group sessions will be conducted, six with students, and one each with teachers, parents, and health professionals. Questions for these sessions can be provided in advance. All sessions will be audio taped, with your consent. The tapes will be transcribed for use in the study, both of which will be stored in a secure place accessible by only the research team for a period of seven years (University Policy and Procedures). All aspects of your participation will be kept confidential except when professional codes of ethics and/or legislation require reporting. We ask that the rights of others in the focus group be respected by the participants as well. You will have the right to withdraw from the study or from answering any questions during the focus group session. Any themes derived from the transcribed focus sessions will not reveal school districts, schools, or participants. Only private discussions with my supervisor may contain reference to schools or school districts. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis and oral examination, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal papers, and book chapters. If you have any questions or concerns about the process at any time, you can contact the researcher (Hm. 973 – 6387; Wk. 423 – 1232), the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey (University of Alberta, 492 – 7609), or the Graduate Studies Coordinator, Dr. Beth Young (492 – 7617).

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and complete the attached form, along with a witness and myself. There will be two copies of this letter and consent form, of which a set will be yours for future reference.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Kathy Kovacs-Burns

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED

ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and consent form with regards to the proposed study. I understand that

1. My name or the name of the institution I am affiliated with will not be mentioned or referenced in any written materials or presentations;
2. Everything I say will be kept confidential except when professional codes of ethics and or legislation require reporting;
3. Themes and concepts will be taken from the transcribed discussions without reference to any individuals, schools, school districts, or institutions;
4. Themes, concepts and issues will be used in the researcher's PhD Thesis, oral examination and final reports for participants, as well as in the future for presentations at conferences or other venues, journal articles/publications, and book chapters;
5. The discussion will be audio taped and transcribed, both of which will be stored in a secure place accessible by only the research team for a period of seven years (University Policy and Procedures);
6. I can withdraw from the discussion or answering a question at any time;
7. I can contact the researcher, her supervisor, or the Department Chairman if I have any concerns or questions regarding the process.

I have read and understand the processes and conditions for participating in this research focus group and I,

_______________________________________ *(please print your name)* , give permission to Kathy Kovacs-Burns to include me in the research project as described.

______________________________ Signature of Participate	____________________ Date
______________________________ Printed name & Signature or Witness (where applicable)	____________________ Date
______________________________ Signature of Investigator (Kathy Kovacs-Burns)	____________________ Date

October/November 1999

Dear ____________________:

RE: Interview Transcripts and Interpretations

In this past year, you along with 86 others participated in interviews or focus groups with me. The interviews and focus groups were based on questions related to stakeholder input, particularly students' input, into curriculum and policy development and reform processes. It is now time to follow up with you for your input into the transcripts and interpretations.

I appreciated your interest and support in allowing me to interview you. I also appreciate your patience with this lengthy process from the interview date to the present, as I now ask you to follow through this next phase in my study. I have attached a copy of the interview transcripts and my interpretations of your responses for each of the questions posed. A copy of the questions referred to during the interview is also attached. You would have had a copy of these same questions at the time of the interview.

Please review the transcripts and interpretations. Make any comments you wish or changes to your responses that you believe now reflects more clearly what you intended to say during the interview. I have enclosed a self-addressed and stamped envelope for you to use to include only the changes in your transcripts or my interpretations, along with a signed copy of this letter. This signed letter will be an acknowledgement of your responses as originally stated, or with the changes you have made. It will also be your permission for me to reference your responses and my interpretations in my thesis. As mentioned no names will be used in the thesis.

I will ensure that you receive a copy of the Executive Summary of my thesis once completed. I am now in the midst of writing the chapters.

I thank you again for all your support and assistance in making this project so worth while for me. I hope that my findings will also provide you with some beneficial information.

I look forward to your responses by December 1, 1999. If faxing is easier or faster, please fax your responses to 423-3322. If you have any questions, please call me at 423-1232 at work (during the day), or 973-6387 at home (evenings).

Sincerely,

____
Name of Person Interviewed (Print)

Kathy Kovacs-Burns,
Ph.D. Candidate, Policy Studies

____
Signature of Person Interviewed

ATTACHMENTS

Date: ________________________